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To

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No. 50

E. H. Sothern

# THE
# MELANCHOLY TALE OF "ME"

## MY REMEMBRANCES

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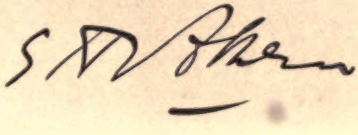

# THE MELANCHOLY TALE OF "ME"

MY REMEMBRANCES

BY

EDWARD H. SOTHERN

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1916

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THE MELANCHOLY TALE OF "ME"

DEDICATED TO

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AS THE "ONLIE BEGETTER" OF THESE STORIES

BY

EDWARD H. SOTHERN

1458153

# PREFACE

WHEN I was young, I had a little friend; and one day, when other little friends were invited to a festivity, I said: "Look here! You hide behind this curtain, and then nobody will know where you are."

"But," said my little friend, "nobody cares!"

The pitiful experience indicated by this remark has remained with me, and I have frequently thought that when we are prepared to jump out from behind our curtain and surprise people with our opinions, we should be warned by my small friend's pathetic conclusion.

However, we never profit by other people's experience, so here I am.

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# PART I

## "ME"

"ME," AGED TWO YEARS

# I

# THE FAIRY GODMOTHER

Most authorities agree that fairy godmothers come down chimneys. It is pretty well established also that their chief vehicle of locomotion is a broomstick. "Me," however, will assure you that, in his own particular case, neither of these statements is correct. "Me" possesses a fairy godmother who has never approached him by the chimney route, and who has ever practised the ordinary means of transportation, although he shrewdly suspects that in some cases she has the chimney habit. When "Me" was a child his ambition was to be a hermit. He had seen a picture of Saint Somebody living in a nice, comfortable cave, with a large loaf of bread and a pitcher of water, a lot of books and a skull. All of these things appealed strongly to "Me." Home-made bread he could devour to the exclusion of all other food; books he was exceedingly fond of and early made them his best friends, and the skull fascinated him. This temple of thought "Me" quite longed to possess, to contemplate it, to commune with it in solitude. You will gather that "Me" was a somewhat unusual child. This, I think, was the case. "Me's" head was very large and his eyes were like saucers—"Goggles" he was called the moment he went to school, and "Goggles" he remained until he grew large enough for his eyes not to be so noticeable.

"Me's" first clear recollection is that of being held up to look at the Atlantic Ocean through the port-hole of a steamer bound for England, and of breaking out into screams of terror at finding, on taking his eyes off the great waves, that he was looking into the face of a black woman. This is now merely the remembrance of a remembrance, but there is a great distinctness about it all the same. "Me" recalls being rescued from the black nurse's arms and put to bed, and here he perceives for the first time a sweet, gentle, white face which has watched over him ever since.

"Me's" next remembrance is of being taught some prayers and of being greatly interested in the pictures conjured up thereby. Next, like a flash, comes the scene of a large hall in a country house, and the arrival of a man from Australia, who unpacked all kinds of weapons of the aborigines—shields, spears, head-dresses, and of seeing "Me's" father and mother and other persons dressed up in these strange things, and of much laughter, and then a great number of people at a very large breakfast-table, and the new man turning out to be an old, old friend of "Me's" father.

Impressions come rapidly after this. Life became interesting and kaleidoscopic. A great many people circulated about "Me's" father and "Me's" large head echoed with ideas from China to Peru. But "Me" preferred to be an observer rather than an actor in the pageant that was opening before him, and it was about this time that one of his saucer eyes fell on the picture of the hermit, and selected that as his calling.

Shortly "Me" went to school and was plunged into abject misery. It is true, the school was not more than two hundred yards from his home; but "Me" would

cast from him thoughts of the alphabet and, dropping into his small lap, with listless hands, that volume which tells us that "A is an archer who shot at a frog," and "B is a butcher who had a great dog," "Me" would, with some effort, picture himself, to himself, as bereft by the great Reaper of both his parents and his nurse, and his small brother and sister, and having reduced himself to a condition of orphanage, friendlessness, and starvation, "Me" would, to the consternation of his pastors and masters and fellow pupils, begin to howl as though his heart would break.

At the end of the term, Mr. Snelling, the schoolmaster, and Mrs. Snelling, his assistant, would chalk up on a blackboard a "letter to parents," to this effect:

My Honored Parents: Mr. and Mrs. Snelling present their respectful compliments, and desire me to say that they are pleased with my progress during the past term. They beg to inform you that I stand second in my class (there were but *two* in the class), that I show an intelligent interest in my studies, and that the next term will begin on July 1. I remain, my dear parents, your dutiful and affectionate son,

"Me."

This letter we copied with much care and much ink, and carried home with us. Enclosed was Mr. Snelling's official report, which, in "Me's" case, invariably read: "Health good; conduct good. Could wish he would be more interested in his studies."

But I think even then "Me's" large head rebelled at the method of imparting information. His interest was not enchained, nor his curiosity sufficiently excited; his attention flagged and his mind wandered, and his thoughts

would leave the dull schoolroom and travel down the road to his devastated home, his defunct parents, his interred nurse, his departed brother and sister and Melancholy claimed "Me" for her own.

While "Me" was emerging from his shell on one side of the Atlantic, his fairy godmother was blossoming into girlhood on the other. "Me's" father was away a good deal from his own children. "The blesseds" he called them, and he took great interest in "the blesseds" of other people. Whenever he could give pleasure to a child he would go out of his way to do so. I remember on one occasion the small son of an old schoolfellow of his was to have a birthday. It occurred to "Me's" father the night before that it would surprise, and please, this little fellow if he ("Me's" father) should appear out of a clear sky in his bedroom early in the morning with a lot of birthday presents. He sent out at once and purchased presents of all kinds. He took a night train from London to Birmingham. He amazed that household by appearing in their midst about seven o'clock in the morning. He crawled into the child's room on all fours, and went through strange and delightful antics before he suddenly disclosed himself; amid great glee and clapping of small hands and sparkling of eyes did he deliver his presents. Amid shouts and embraces did he depart and take a train back to London, four hours away. His "blesseds" were ever in his mind's eye.

So when he discovered "Me's" fairy godmother, then a young girl, he at once won her heart by exhibiting that respect for youthful fancies that not all grown-up people evince. One must understand children. The fairy godmother was a shy creature, as fairies are apt to be; yet

EDWARD H. SOTHERN, AGED FIFTEEN YEARS

she experienced a keen pleasure when attending the theatre to watch "Me's" parent act. That audacious creature would stop in the midst of a speech, look directly at the fairy and say: "There's Miranda," which, of course, was not her name. It was her real name that he used, however. Down would go the fairy's head below the level of the box, conscious that the entire world had its eyes glued on her. How should she ever show her face again? There was, however, a fearful joy in the moment. She could hear "Me's" father saying quite loud: "She has disappeared," and again, "Miranda!" At last she would emerge, slowly, very slowly. No one was looking at her; people had somehow thought the interpolated talk about her was part of the play. On subsequent visits she underwent similar experiences, and again she would suffer the exquisite danger in which childhood delights.

Miranda grew to womanhood, endowed with all the graces which fairies bestow, and one day when "Me" appeared within the magic circle, she made it quite clear to him that here was his fairy godmother. "Me," who had had doubts about many things, began to see them fade away. He soon observed that Miranda's golden wings sheltered others than himself. She appeared to be smoothing out the lives of people all about her. Difficulties disappeared like magic when Miranda lent a hand. She possessed a heart as open as the day to kindly pity; a bounty all-embracing as the sun; she would wave her wand and this one, perverse and incapable, became tractable and industrious; again, and he who had no object in life found himself and proceeded apace; another who is certain she possesses no talent, receives a tap on the shoulder, and lo! the garden gives

forth golden fruit. Pumpkins become coaches-and-four, bumpkins become princes, while mice become prancing steeds. "Me" as he ambled along the road of life got to think, as the days passed, as he met each new adventure: "What would Miranda think of this?" "I wonder if Miranda would like that?" so that Miranda's influence became an ever-present thing. Sometimes "Me" has been sorry for Miranda, sometimes he has felt that she would be pleased; but she has, so to speak, constantly slid down "Me's" chimney exclaiming: "Well, here I am!"

So again from the remote corners of the earth came "Me" and Miranda, one to influence and one to be influenced. Are we not as the seed blown by the wind until it meets its mate? or taken on the wings of the bee to be wedded on some distant flower?

And what became of Miranda? Just what should have become of her! As evening fell she approached a dark wood. "This," said Miranda, "is the abode of the fierce dragon," but she walked on undaunted. As she entered the wood, a thousand monsters rose up in her path and cried:

"What brings you here? Quick, the password!"

"Love," said Miranda, and they all vanished.

A prince appeared in shining armor, and he took Miranda by the hand, and he drew a sword which was called "Enlightenment," and after a terrific conflict he slew the dragon, and Miranda and the prince walked out of the wood, and there they mounted the prince's horse, and they rode away to his kingdom, which is as wide as the whole world, and Miranda became a Queen. She has not, however, abandoned the chimney habit by any means; one cannot throw off a habit like that so

easily, and I happen to know, though it is not suspected by the ordinary passer-by, that when the moon is dim and the fire burns low Miranda will say to the King: "I must slide down a chimney."

"Whose chimney?" will say the King.

"Whose chimney?" will say Miranda. "Really, how can it matter whose chimney it is? All chimneys lead to people, all people need me, and I need all people. I say again, I must slide down a chimney this moment, and what is more to the point, you must slide with me."

Of course, common, selfish people will turn up their common, selfish noses and consider it the height of absurdity that this royal couple should then and there arise and go out into the cold, and select a chimney, and climb up to it, and slide down it, and, having reached the floor, it will seem even more absurd that they should strike an attitude picturesque and quaint and say: "Here we are." And who will believe that, having given everybody three wishes, and having granted at least two, they will fly up the chimney and home again? I say no one will believe this thing. Well, it is not necessary. The important thing is that things are; not that you or I or the cat believe them to be.

I may here state that "Me" called himself "Me," because he couldn't, or wouldn't, say "I," and that "Me" is me.

## II

# THE JAM-FACED BOY

A GREAT injury, an unworthy revenge; the dreadful humiliation of one's enemy, a noble self-abnegation and a reconciliation that partook of the apotheosis in a fairy-tale—these incidents are seldom crowded into the short space of thirty minutes in the history of even a grown-up person. Indeed, seldom do they transpire in a life-time. Yet it was the fortune of "Me" to undergo the rage, the base triumph, the grief, and the joy in one-half hour which fate reserves usually for the turbulent climaxes of the careers of great men.

One day "Me," as was his custom, toddled down a flight of stone steps into the kitchen of his father's house. There strange and wonderful things were constantly happening; blood-stained joints of beef or mutton were to be observed; a sausage machine might be turned, and the meat transformed into mince meat. The spice-box was at hand whence cinnamon, cloves, wintergreen, et cetera, could be purloined. One might be allowed to manipulate the rolling-pin on a pleasant mess of dough. The pantry was hard by and one's fingers could be stuck in jams and puddings. Fanny Marsh, the cook, was large and red and amiable. One could see knives being cleaned near at hand and boots polished. Life was full of interest and discovery. As "Me" entered the kitchen on this particular and historic occasion his eye fell on a small boy of the lower orders seated on a chair eating

bread and jam, a dilapidated doll in his lap; his toes, in muddy and ancient boots, did not come within six inches of the floor. "Me," on the contrary, being just up and dressed, had on a black-velvet suit, red stockings, and a superior pair of shoes with shining buckles. "Me" entered the kitchen and stared at the new boy. That ill-mannered child climbed down from his chair, walked over to "Me," held up his ragged doll, kicked "Me" on the shin and then put out his tongue. Having thus expressed his feelings, whatever they were, he went back to his perch and placed some more jam on his face.

"Me" had not encountered such treatment before. This was quite a new experience. The new boy proved to be the son and heir of a friend of the cook who was paying a morning call. His mother, a cheerful-looking woman, gave her son a smack on the head and some good advice, and returned to her gossip with the cook.

"Me" stood deep in thought for a moment, then turned on his heel and climbed up three flights of stairs to his nursery. There were toys of all kinds—a rocking-horse, many kinds of dolls of both sexes and both black and white, waxen and wooden; mechanical toys, lambs that said "Baa!" cows that said "Moo!" dogs that barked, and bears that, once wound up, would walk about; there were engines and railway-cars which would travel all over the room, and tops which behaved in wonderful and eccentric fashion. "Me" contemplated this wealth of possessions for a moment, then he selected a few choice specimens and carried them with some labor down to the kitchen. He reached the immediate presence of the vulgar little boy; he allowed him to gaze on the wonderful toys, then he passed on and deposited them on the floor of the large scullery beyond the

kitchen. The eyes of the jam-faced boy became large with wonder and envy.

Again "Me" toiled up-stairs and again he came down laden with his treasures. Once more he paused in front of that ill-mannered urchin, and once more the scullery received the arms full of dolls, steam-engines, and what not. Four, five, six journeys did "Me" make; silently, slowly, cruelly, inevitably filling the heart of that wretched, ill-conditioned boy with envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness. At length down came "Me" with his mechanical toys. He wound them all up and set them going. The lambs said "Baa!" the cow said "Moo!" the dog said "Bow-wow!"; the train ran about, the bear walked around.

The jam-faced child could stand no more. He opened wide his jam-filled mouth and wept as though his heart would break. The cook and his mother, who had gossiped on in blissful ignorance of the tragedy enacted in their neighborhood, turned in amazement to the howling boy. "Me," whose dearest hopes of vengeance were now realized, began to experience the strangest feeling of dissatisfaction. His victory seemed unfruitful and even bitter. A great impulse to love this bedraggled boy choked up in his throat and took hold of his heart and filled up his eyes. He gathered up an armful of his toys and threw them on the lap of the yelling urchin, who placed his hands on them and yelled louder than before. "Me" procured a new supply from where he had deposited them in the scullery, and again covered the weeping youngster with dolls and other treasures.

"What's the matter?" cried the weeping one's mother.

"I hate my dolly," sobbed that jam-faced boy.

"He shall have mine," said "Me." "I give him mine."

The jam-faced boy stopped suddenly, a strange light shone in his wet eyes. He crawled down off his chair and approached "Me." That fortunate creature stood there in his nice, clean, new velvet clothes and his red stockings and his tidy hair, an unfamiliar emotion of shame in his young heart. The jam-faced boy went to him and pressed his jam-covered lips against "Me's" red cheek and said: "I love you."

With a sob "Me" threw his arms about him, and a great friendship was born.

Several times after this the jam-faced boy came to play in "Me's" garden, and many times since has "Me" hesitated to judge harshly or to retaliate hastily, because he has not been able to forget the sweet taste of the jammy lips of the jam-faced child. The conversion of that imp from a foe to a friend contains the matter for a philosophical treatise, for had he been old enough or big enough to swear and oppose and fight, the outcome might have been far otherwise. The doctrine of non-resistance is here vindicated. People who cease to fight may love perforce. Who is he who declares that, if you keep silent and look long at your enemy, you must soon love him out of very pity—pity that he is your enemy, pity that he is himself, pity that he is man? Oh, "Me," think on this and be still.

## III

## "GOING NOWHERE"

"More haste, less speed," said Rebecca, "Me's" nurse. Now as "Me's" small feet insisted on running whether he wished it or not, this comment, often repeated, caused him much concern. It was Rebecca's custom to follow up this remark with a relation of the race between the hare and the tortoise. It always seemed to "Me" that he would much rather have been the hare, although that giddy animal had not won the race, for even thus early was he convinced that the joy was in the endeavor and not in the accomplishment. He pictured himself as the hare running round and round the tortoise until he was weary and then taking a nap; again catching up with the tortoise and dancing about that joyless traveller once more. Surely, the hare's journey was the more glad—to leap forth with so much purpose and confidence and to run for the mere love of running. When the tortoise should have arrived, what then? What next? The fun surely was all over when the goal had been reached. Why, the hare was better off after all, for he had still to get there.

Rebecca's philosophy was by no means convincing, and when her rather dull eye was not on him "Me" would run, and run, and run, with no object whatever in view, merely to be flying on tiptoe toward infinity. Pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat would go "Me's" toes with amazing rapidity to school or from school, to anywhere or from

anywhere. Not only now but later, when he was quite a big fellow, like the rat-a-tat-tat of the policeman's club on the pavement, "Me's" mother would hear his quick step a long way off and would run down-stairs to let him in, for she well knew that nobody else sped along at such a pace.

"Why do you always run?" would say "Me's" mother.

"I don't know," he would reply. "I have to."

"But you are not in a hurry?"

"No, but I must get there, anywhere, wherever it is."

"But you go like the wind," said "Me's" mother, which was quite true, and a fine way to go, too, whistling and kicking up one's heels generally. It was not at all necessary for there to be a prize in sight, nor any ambition to gratify, nor any one to emulate, nor anything to attain; and when "Me" stopped, breathless and panting, he would shortly sing in an equally purposeless manner, again like the wind, not at all that he wished to excel as a singer, nor that he desired any praise for his singing, nor that, having sung, he had the slightest intention of trying to remember what song he had sung.

"Where are you going?" said Uncle Hugh one day, when "Me," flying like the wind, collided with him around a corner of the garden.

"Nowhere," said "Me."

"Ah! a very good place, too," said Uncle Hugh.

Most people would have considered this reply foolish, not so "Me." He was well aware that, for all his bright smile, Uncle Hugh's remarks were wise and weighty. "Nowhere" was a very good place to be bound for. There were no responsibilities, no tiresome people, and

then, best of all, one never arrived there, so that it was ever in prospect and never attained.

When Rebecca, after evening prayers, would discuss the advisability of getting to heaven, "Me," very seriously, wanted to know what he should do when he got there. Rebecca was much perplexed. Her general idea seemed to be that the people of paradise passed the time in singing.

"And after that?" said "Me."

"Well," said Rebecca, "they say their prayers."

"And what more?" persisted "Me."

But Rebecca's sources of information were at an end, and "Me" was exhorted not to be stupid. "Me" gathered, however, from Rebecca's casual discourse that there would be much flying in the life to come, which meant going "nowhere" on wings, and at a much swifter pace than mere feet could carry one. But then one could not fly merely round and round in a circle, nor flit forever from cloud to cloud. What "Me" wanted to know was the purpose of the flying, and he concluded that the condition of the righteous was blessed only in so far that this inclination, this yearning, this hunger of the human soul to be proceeding, to be ever on the way, to be ever aspiring to something further, higher, swifter, was no doubt in itself the true joy; and that heaven consisted of no tangible thing at all, not of anything done, but of the process of doing and a vastly keener sight to perceive what to do. So far as "Me's" observation went, accomplishment meant being tired out and being put to bed, or, worse still, in the case of getting what one dearly desired to eat, it meant pain and regrets and a spoonful of treacherous jam. Really, it seemed that to look through the window of the sweet-

stuff shop, after all said and done, had produced more real happiness than the actual swallowing of the many-colored sugar-plums. Indeed, at a later day, it was made quite clear that this was true. To obtain is to be dissatisfied, and to be dissatisfied is to start on the quest anew and so on forever; so that no matter how glad one's labor might make others, the laborer who would be content must perpetually leave his work behind and speed to a fresh task which always shall look fairer than the one he has forsaken. "Me" did not know then but he discerned afterward that the eternal restlessness of his little feet would mount and mount to his heart and to his head, so that one should beat and beat and the other plan and plan, always hastening on and on and on to "nowhere."

That Uncle Hugh had wanted to rescue "Chinese Gordon," that was the great thing; that he failed to do it mattered nothing at all. That Uncle Hugh had ever been ready to go "nowhere" at the queen's command at an instant's warning, that preparation, that aspiration, which had seemed so childish, was one of the things that had made Uncle Hugh quite great, quite poor, and quite happy. That he did not get anywhere was nothing except as a matter of geography. "Me" and some other children realized that. It was not necessary to get anywhere; the great thing was to start with enthusiasm and to keep going with great intention on the tips of one's toes forever.

Just about this time "Me's" schoolmaster, Mr. Snelling who kept what is called a "Dame's school" (Mrs. Snelling being the dame), announced that "The Snelling Academy for young ladies and gentlemen" would indulge in some athletic sports. The young ladies who

thus proposed to anticipate the present robuster age, and the young gentlemen who were to be compelled to compete with them, were aged from about five to seven or eight. "Me" was actually one of the elder boys since he was weighed down by the burden of seven summers. Much preparation for these events was indulged in in "Me's" garden. "Me's" own passion for running was about to attain to the dignity of a profession. No longer was it to be a solitary pastime indulged in for the mere love of travelling on tiptoe with arms outstretched and winglike. "Me" looked around at his fellow pupils with a sportsman's eye, comparing his chubby legs to theirs, and by means of certain trial spurts establishing his confidence in their defeat. There was to be a prize consisting of a pewter mug which was exhibited in the schoolroom, and on the day of the sports, which took place in "Me's" garden, this mug and some other small matters excited the admiration of parents and guardians. There were flags and there was lemonade and things that might with safety be eaten. There was a tent. Indeed the occasion was distinguished. But all these things have faded in the memory. The fact that stands out in bold relief is that "Me" won the race in fine style and that his victory made him miserable. When he had gained the pewter mug he didn't want it. For "Me's" own sister and a boy who was universally condemned because his father was a butcher (since then "Me" has learned that it is not being a butcher that excites contempt, the point being whether you are a small butcher or a big butcher, whether you slay one cow or one million)—"Me's" own sister and the blood-stained butcher boy wept bitterly because they had lost the race. "Me" thought they wanted

*From a photograph by Sarony*

UNCLE HUGH AND HIS DOG

the mug. First he went to his tear-drenched sister and embracing her said: "Here! take it. I give it to you."

That athletic female thrust him away and cried: "I don't want the mug; I wanted to win the race."

Abashed, "Me" approached the butcher boy. "I give you the mug," said "Me," handing his treasure to the steak-fed child.

That worthy stopped crying, flung the mug away and yelled: "I don't want it. I wanted to win."

"Me" let the mug stay where it fell. He did not want it either. What he had wanted he had achieved, and that he knew was victory; but victory that made other people wretched, which made him wretched, was no victory. That was strange, and then he knew that he, too, would have wept had he met defeat, and that without victory the mug was no mug.

For some days "Me's" sister and the butcher boy would not be comforted; indeed their spirits were only revived when "Me" raced them once more and let them win.

Rebecca was present on this occasion. Said she to "Me": "There! 'Master Clever,' what did I tell you? More haste, less speed."

Then was "Me" entirely convinced that the hare had allowed the tortoise to pass him out of pure pity, and because he had discovered the entire futility of winning anything at any time or anywhere. The great satisfaction consisted not in winning but in being able to win, and sometimes even in seeing other people win. Then there were the losers, how about them? The butcher boy, for instance!

"What are those people doing?" said "Me" to Uncle

Hugh, who had taken him to an art gallery. The people in question were seated at easels copying pictures.

Said Uncle Hugh: "They are studying art."

A woman, who wore an apron which was covered with paint till it resembled Joseph's coat of many colors, here closed one eye while she held up a paint-brush, running her thumb up and down it as she thrust it between her and a painting which hung on the wall.

"What is she doing?" whispered "Me."

"She's measuring something," said Uncle Hugh.

"Why does she close one eye?" said "Me."

"So that she can see better," replied Uncle Hugh.

"Me" took a good look at the woman student. "But," said he, after a survey, "she has the other eye half closed too, why is that?"

"She is an artist," said Uncle Hugh, "and an artist must learn to see with half an eye."

"Why?" said "Me."

Replied Uncle Hugh: "So that with half an eye he can see more than you or I can see with both eyes wide open."

"And when he sees, what does he do?" said "Me."

"He runs," said Uncle Hugh.

"Runs?" said "Me." "Runs where?"

"Nowhere," answered Hugh. "As you do and as I do. To see as he learns to see is to want to do, and to want to do is to want to run, and to run when you want to is to be happy, and——"

But "Me" finished the sentence: "And to win the mug is to want to throw it away."

"Yes," said Hugh. "To throw it away and to keep on running."

"Does it matter which eye you shut?" said "Me," shutting each of his eyes alternately.

"Not as a rule," said Uncle Hugh, "but some people have only one good eye, and if they choose to shut that then they can't see at all."

"What do they do then?" inquired "Me."

"They approach the people who have learned to see with only half an eye, and tell them how to see."

"But if they can't see themselves," said "Me," "they must be blind."

"That's just where the fun comes in," said Uncle Hugh, "when the people, with only one eye half shut who can see more than the people with two eyes wide open, are told how to see by the people who have no eyes at all." And here Uncle Hugh indulged in one of those fits of laughter which convinced persons that he was deranged.

"What's an artist?" said "Me" suddenly.

Uncle Hugh stopped laughing. "An artist," said he, "is one of those fellows who can see with half an eye."

"And what is art?" persisted the insatiable "Me."

"Art," pondered the ever-patient Hugh, "is the work accomplished by the fellow who has become so inspired by the things he sees with half an eye that, in spite of everything he is told by the fellows who have no eyes, he excites the emotions of the people who can't see very much with two eyes, to such an extent that these fellows with two eyes see everything he has seen with his half eye. This is called interpretation. The thing seen and interpreted is nature and the interpretation is art, which, being so greatly a question of eyes, may be said to be 'all my eye.'" And here that ridiculous Uncle Hugh cackled again.

"What is an 'interpreter'?" said "Me."

"An interpreter is an untidy fellow with long hair who makes you understand a foreign language."

"Oh, yes, a sort of waiter," said "Me," who had once lunched at Gatti's.

"Quite so," said Hugh, "a waiter. That is, he waits. Frequently he waits a long while for people to understand him, and for his pay; usually he is not paid until he is dead. In fact, it may be said of interpreters generally that they don't really live until they die."

"That's strange," said "Me."

"Yes," reflected Hugh. "Dead men tell more tales than they are credited with. In fact, you may say that we leave 'em alone till they've gone home and left their tales behind them."

"Oh! that's Bo-Peep!" cried "Me."

"Yes," said Hugh, "Bo-Peep, a great philosopher who believed as I do that all things are ordained; and perceived that her sheep were not lost but merely gone before with their tails still inevitably behind. No doubt she left them alone and kept on running. This matter of running," said Hugh, "is really at the bottom of everything. There is just one thing to remember, and that is that we mustn't run away, because to run away means that you are trying to get somewhere, to hide, to escape. Of course, that won't do at all. Once you did that you'd be out of the running, and even if you were allowed to run you wouldn't want to run any more, ever."

"Yes," said "Me." "That would change everything, of course."

Said Hugh: "People who are going 'nowhere' always sing and laugh. Look at all the people in the street, they are all going somewhere. You don't see one man

in a thousand even smile. Now and then a boy will whistle, but not for long. He'll be going somewhere soon, and then he'll be sad and silent like the rest."

"Hello! Stewart, what are you doing here?" said a man who now approached.

"Cruising," said Uncle Hugh.

"Becalmed?" said the man.

"No, under full sail," said Hugh.

"Where are you bound for?" said the man.

"Nowhere," said Hugh.

"Good," said the man. "May you reach the Fortunate Islands," and away he went.

"Where are the Fortunate Islands?" inquired "Me."

"They don't exist," said Uncle Hugh.

"Then how can you reach them?" wondered "Me."

"You can't reach them. That's just what I tell you," said Hugh. "They don't exist because they are fortunate, and it is fortunate that they don't exist, otherwise we would reach them, and what would we do then?"

"We would have nowhere to run to," said "Me."

"Exactly," replied Hugh.

"Besides," continued "Me," "if we ever reached them we might find they were not fortunate after all."

"There you are again!" cried Hugh.

"Then we should sit down and cry, I suppose," said "Me."

"That would be a pretty kettle of fish," said Uncle Hugh.

"So it's better to keep on under full sail, isn't it?" said "Me."

"Yes!" cried Hugh with enthusiasm, "with the wind

in your face and waves high, and the spray all about, and your weather-eye on the stars."

"Which is your weather-eye?" said "Me."

"It's the one you keep half open," whispered Uncle Hugh.

## IV

# SORRY WHEN DEAD

"You'll be sorry when I'm dead," said "Me" one day to his nurse, Rebecca. This remark had such an effect, by throwing Rebecca into hysterics, that the value of it as a weapon of defense became instantly apparent to "Me." He tried it by way of experiment on his mother. She did not make an outcry as Rebecca had done, but she ceased talking and paled visibly, and looked long and tenderly at "Me." "Me's" heart smote him, but the idea of self-destruction began to take root, and as "Me" played in the garden that day he would pause now and then as some fresh means of doing away with himself occurred to him.

There was every reason why "Me" should consider suicide. He was adored by his parents; idolized by Rebecca; the gardener could not garden without him; there was no wish he could possibly formulate which would not instantly be granted. Consequently, life was a burden to "Me," and the realms beyond the grave properly became food for contemplation.

Uncle Hugh was consulted at an early date, and told strange tales of how people had destroyed themselves. The phœnix was especially interesting—making a conflagration of himself and then, just when everybody was saying how sorry they were, and what a lovely bird he had been, springing up out of his own ashes and saying: "Here we are again!" The pelican, too, was an exciting fowl which allowed its children to eat it up and, so to

speak, lived again in its progeny. Then there was a certain Black Knight of King Arthur's court who used to permit people to cut his head off at one blow, only to pick it up with his own two hands and place it again on his shoulders. This seemed an admirable plan of self-immolation. Then there was a god who had departed this life by turning himself into a flower, and a goddess who, grown weary, had transformed herself into a tree. This again opened up pleasant possibilities and "Me" regarded the various green things in the garden with speculative eye as he debated which of them he would prefer to become.

Several kittens had lately been drowned in the stable-yard. The coachman had condemned them to a watery grave. "Me" had witnessed their demise with solemn interest, and poked them with sticks after the spirit had fled. A funeral had taken place next door, and from the nursery window a fine view could be had of the proceedings. Besides friends and relatives, there were a dozen "mutes," or hired mourners, who, of course, had never met or known or heard of the deceased. Rebecca had declared that it was a fine funeral, and that one should always have at least twelve "mutes" to weep for one on one's final journey.

"What do they weep for," asked "Me," "if they don't know the dead person?"

"They are paid to weep," said Rebecca.

"How much are they paid?" asked "Me."

"Oh, I don't know," said Rebecca. "Don't ask no questions, and you'll receive no answers."

This was a self-evident proposition, but it did not silence "Me's" speculations as to the value of sorrow. He pursued his train of thought with Biggs, the butler,

who was of the opinion that a "mute" might be paid as much as five shillings to weep for a gentleman and two shillings and six pence for a poor man.

"How much for a little boy?" said "Me."

"Oh, I suppose for a little boy about a shilling," said Biggs.

"And how much would he cry for a shilling?" persisted "Me."

"Oh, a bit at the 'ouse, and a bit at the cemetery. 'Mutes' don't cry on the road, I fancy," said Biggs, "and they laugh on the way back."

It seemed to "Me," on thinking it over, that tears at this rate would be about a farthing apiece for a little boy. That seemed a lot of money and an agreeable way to earn one's living, almost as good as being a hermit, and "Me" seriously thought for some while that if he should decide to compromise the matter and hang on to life he might do worse than be a "mute." That one must sooner or later become an angel was a fact established. Rebecca had a lot of pictures of angels, male and female. There was, however, some confusion in "Me's" mind as to whether he would eventually be an angel or a sheep. Rebecca dictated prayers each night to "Me" and his small sister and minuter brother. In chorus they repeated:

"The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;
He makes me down to lie,
In pastures green He leadeth me,
The quiet waters by.
My soul He doth restore again,
And me to walk doth make
Forth in the paths of righteousness
And for His own dear sake."

The chief picture called up in "Me's" mind was the picture of himself and his sister and brother as sheep. For many moons "pastures green" was to "Me" "Parders Green," which seemed a locality such as Turnham Green or Shepherd's Bush. "He doth," owing to Rebecca's lack of h's, became "Edith," a female who appeared to have some influence, and "walk doth make" was translated by repetition into "wardothmake," a word of no significance whatever. After many days "Me" thought what it all meant, and questioned Rebecca as to "Parders Green," and "Edith," and "wardothmake." After much discussion, "Me" was fain to confess that the entire prayer was a puzzle to him, and that he was especially confounded to decipher how he could be at one and the same time a sheep and an angel. Rebecca's resources were stretched to the utmost to satisfy "Me's" analytical mind, and she at length made confusion worse confounded by declaring that "Me" was a donkey, a statement which, though final, was no solution. Being yet unacquainted with the doctrine of transmigration of souls, "Me" contemplated this threefold personality with mixed satisfaction and disgust.

Up to now, grief had to "Me" been associated with outcry and hullabaloo, and he was much astonished one day when told that the sad lady next door, who walked for hours and hours in her garden, as "Me" could see by climbing on to his own wall, was dying of grief. She made no noise, she shed no tears, she made no faces, the usual accompaniments of grief were absent—all. Sweetly, kindly, gently, silently, she would greet "Me" on the wall. A little while and she was no more; she had died of longing for the man who was gone. This,

then, was grief, noiseless and low; no sounds, no fuss, no cry. That seemed very strange.

After a while "Me" was taken to church and introduced to the mysteries of finding things in prayer-books, hymns, collects, lessons, psalms. It was all very distracting and what with people saying, "How de do?" and finding money to put in the plate, and looking out at the corners of eyes at other people's bonnets, and prodding persons to keep them awake, "Me" found a great amount of entertainment, but wondered considerably how it all helped to get one into heaven, to become an angel or a sheep. Here "Me" became acquainted with the tragedy of Cain and Abel. An old gentleman in the pulpit told the story very graphically, and laid stress on the long and silent vigils of Cain. He traced Cain's growing anger against Abel, pictured the awful crime in a terrible manner, and drew such a ghastly image of Cain's punishment in after years that "Me" was awake all night, and swore under the clothes that he never would build altars or make burnt offerings as long as he lived. This, then, was hate, thought "Me." Here was a passion new and terrible; imagination shivered before such a picture as this. "Me" contemplated his own small brother and wondered if he could ever bring himself to slay him. The idea was so overwhelming that he burst into uproarious grief, and for quite a while could not be comforted.

"Me's" mother used to read to him a good deal—stories, fairy-tales, some poetry. "Me" was always very attentive and always asked a great many questions. He was especially curious as to why gentlemen who loved ladies made such very long and tiresome speeches to impress this fact upon them; the talk seemed

so excessively wearisome and unnecessary, and "Me" always begged to be spared this part of the romance, and to have it skipped so one could get on to the fighting or the escapes on horseback, or the adventures of the funny characters. One day, however, "Me's" mother read the comedy of "Twelfth Night," and "Me's" attention, which had wandered a bit, became riveted when she came to the lines:

> "She never told her love
> But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,
> Feed on her damask cheek; she pined in thought,
> And with a green and yellow melancholy
> She sat like Patience on a monument
> Smiling at grief. Was not this love indeed?"

How it was that the words remained in his memory he did not know, but they did, and the fact that love is silent, and still, and strong, and voiceless took hold of "Me's" imagination. He had in his mind three distinct pictures: The silent lady's grief, Cain's hate, and the voiceless love of the woman in the poem. This latter he inevitably associated with the gentle, ever-watchful, ever-loving face that bent over him the last thing each night and greeted him the first thing each morning. The impression of this threefold image came and went again as the years flew by until "Me" grew to have a settled conviction that lines expressing this image and this idea existed, and that he knew them by heart and yet knew them not. He could almost see them and hear them. Many years afterward he came across a writing-cabinet such as people used in those days, a thing like a box with brass corners which opened in the middle and formed a sloping desk. Some old letters and papers

MOTHER OF EDWARD H. SOTHERN

were inside, and in the handwriting of a hand long still, clear and firm as though written yesterday, were the lines always known and never beheld, penned in the day when his brain first received them, surely an echo from that other brain which had thought and planned and joyed and sorrowed for him long, long ago:

"Deep grief is still. Deep grief is still and low,
Silent its waters ebb and silent flow.
Not hers the outcry and the labor'd breath;
She is as quiet as her sister Death,
And suffering all, feareth no further blow.

"Deep hate is still. Deep hate is low and still.
Hate slumbers not; but, hugging close its ill,
With half-shut, glowing eyes doth watch and wait,
Gnawing its heart, so feeding hate with hate,
While its pale, horrid, speechless lips say 'Kill!'

"Still is deep love. So still! So still and deep,
'Twould seem love languished, lying there asleep;
But that his smiling mouth forever says:
'Lo! I am here! Mine are thy nights and days!'
In shine or shadow, do you laugh or weep."

# V

# FINE FEATHERS

When the big policeman appeared on the scene and told the wicked boys to "move on out of that," one youngster, utterly unabashed by the majesty of the law, cried: "Oh, go on! It ain't you, it's your clothes."

This statement reduced the criminal code, and the penitentiaries, and the wisdom of centuries, and the "bobby" evolved thereby as the symbol of order, to what that bluecoat actually is: a symbol. When he holds up his hand and the mighty traffic of London stops, ebbs, or flows at his beck, it is his clothes—the outward and visible "bobby"—who, finger on pulse, thus affects the circulation of London's great heart. Some yards of blue cloth and quite a number of buttons, enclosing one mere man, enable him to hold multitudes in subjection.

The whole thing seemed to be a question of clothes. This is what happened: "Me" was out shopping with his mother. The carriage had stopped at the dressmaker's in New Bond Street; a very small and dirty boy was being sadly overcome and beaten by several larger and even dirtier boys. Without a moment's hesitation, "Me's" mother, quite regardless of her beautiful dress, and unmindful of a crowd of very superior people clad in the height of fashion, had flown to the rescue of the small and dirty boy, had broken her lovely parasol over the heads of his tormentors; with

remarkable strategy, had swung the tiny victim behind her, and stood panting and victorious, holding the astonished foemen at bay.

"Me's" mother possessed a very sweet touch of Irish brogue and she now, with flushed cheeks, offered some advice to the small boy's oppressors that had the effect which music is said to have upon the savage breasts. The crowd, held back by the policeman, behaved as crowds usually do. There was some sympathy, some laughter, some comment, and much wonder as the pretty lady lifted the ragged urchin into her carriage and told "Me" to keep him there until the wicked big boys had disappeared. "Me's" mother then went into the shop and spent some time in trying on new frocks.

Pointer, the coachman, was extremely proud of his carriage, and his harness, and his nice white breeches, and his shiny top-boots, and his shinier silk hat, and when he sat on the box outside a shop it was really a great sight. He was very serious and not inclined to laugh at anything, although now and then he would condescend to look exceedingly knowing, as much as to say: "Of course you and I and Queen Victoria, we know better." "Me" had often thought how nobly stern and immovable Pointer was under the gibes of cab-drivers and omnibus-drivers and other people who appeared to have been born without any manners at all, and who, it seemed, felt called upon to shout comic and disturbing remarks at all dignified persons. Pointer apparently was always stone-deaf on these occasions, and as impervious as the iron statue of the Duke of Wellington at Hyde Park corner. When out driving with Pointer on the box, "Me" felt that London, as it were, revolved about that silent, confident figure.

Buses and cabs and even streets seemed to do just as he wanted them to; pedestrians and peddlers and crossing-sweepers actually appeared to belong to him, and to be entirely subservient to his caprice. Pointer was a lordly personage and one not to be lightly questioned even by the police. "Me" thought that perhaps Mr. Gladstone alone would properly interrogate him when on the box.

It may be imagined then that when the dirty boy was placed by "Me's" mother in the clean carriage, "Me's" first thought was: "What will Pointer think?" And sure enough there was Pointer, his head turned backward and his left eye strained through the carriage window, and with a look which plainly said: "Here's a pretty go!" Rude fellows in the crowd, which had collected to observe the fray, made some remarks which were intended to agitate Pointer and calculated to disturb his dignity. For example, he was asked how he "liked driving a bathing-machine," and whether he intended "to provide the mud-stained little boy with a piece of soap." Pointer's interior was without a doubt seething like a very volcano, but his demeanor was as cold as a frosty morning, and his countenance as reserved as a bath bun. Having relieved its feeling and exhaused its wit on the unresponsive Pointer, and persuaded by the paternal policeman, the crowd evaporated. "Me" was left alone face to face with the street arab. Surprise had silenced that adventurer. After a few subsiding sniffles and two or three final sobs, he sat and glared at "Me" wordless, mud-stained, and pale. He had been badly beaten; one arm hung limp and gave him evident pain when he moved, he had a cut above his eye, some blood trickled over his nose.

No doubt social intercourse is somewhat artificial. It has to be taught, from placing one's knife and fork tidily together on the plate, to opening a conversation cunningly, or entering upon a new acquaintance with tact and propriety. "Me" had pretty good manners, but his impulses were still controlled by certain precepts, and he found himself distinctly considering how Rebecca would have advised him to proceed in this unprecedented emergency, and seriously concerned as to what Pointer was thinking. The new boy's nose solved the problem. "Me" took from his pocket a nice clean handkerchief and pressed it shyly into the paw of the visitor.

"Please blow your nose," said "Me."

The new boy winced as "Me" touched his right arm and said: "Ow! I can't lift it."

"Me" placed the handkerchief in the left hand, and the child wiped the blood from his brow and polished his nose as if it were a door-knob. The ice thus broken, "Me" asked the small creature why the others had beaten him.

"'Cos I'm a little 'un," said the disabled boy. "You just wait till I'm a big 'un, I'll show you."

From this point confidences were swift. The newcomer confided in "Me" that he was hungry and "Me" produced things to eat, purchased at Bonthron the baker's, where it was customary to stop for provender on shopping days. The new boy rapidly became sticky as well as dirty.

Shortly "Me's" mother came out of the shop. She fluttered a moment over the street boy and, finding that his arm really was injured, concluded that he should be taken to a hospital. Pointer was given directions.

He touched his shining hat with his whip, and away went the clean carriage and the dirty boy.

At the hospital it was declared that the arm was broken—not very serious, but it meant many days in bed. The child's mother was to be notified. "Me's" mother made many arrangements. She waited until the small stranger had been bathed and placed in a lovely white bed. When she and "Me" went to look at him, his face had been washed, his hair brushed, he had on a perfectly clean white nightgown. "Me's" mother said he was a pretty little fellow and bent down and kissed him.

Said "Me" on the way down-stairs: "I thought he was a common little boy, but he looks quite nice."

"That was his clothes," said "Me's" mother. "Be sure to remember that all little children are equal."

"Are they all ladies and gentlemen, then?" said "Me."

"They are angels," said "Me's" mother.

"Am I an angel?" said "Me."

"Me's" mother did not reply to this, but she kissed "Me" and laughed.

It was evident that soap had a good deal to do with making people angels. It had not been noticed that this boy was an angel until after he had been washed!

"How long are they angels?" asked "Me."

"Oh, until they grow up," replied "Me's" mother, and she stopped her laughter and looked out at the carriage window.

"Aren't grown-up people angels?" persisted "Me."

"Not often," said "Me's" mother.

"Are they equal, too?" said "Me."

"Well, no, I'm afraid they are not," and "Me's" mother was laughing again.

MOTHER WITH "ME" IN HER ARMS

"When do little children stop being equal?" "Me" inquired.

"When they stop being children," said "Me's" mother.

"Oh, yes," said "Me," as a light broke in on him, "when some grow up to be bigger than others. Of course, they are not equal then."

Said "Me's" mother: "That is their outside. That they are equal is not a question of outsides."

"Oh, it's their insides, then!" cried "Me."

"Me's" mother was very patient, but here was a sorry problem: how to satisfy "Me's" curiosity on a rather abstruse question.

"My darling," said she, "it is not what people look like that makes them your equals or your inferiors; it is what they really are. I want you to remember that. This little boy is now a child, so he is good. He may grow up to be bad. It is not at all whether he will be tall or short, but whether he will be a good man or a bad man."

"Me" pondered over the rude boy's remark to the policeman: "It ain't you, it's your clothes." The new boy had looked just like a little gentleman when he was washed and in a nice clean bed. It was his clothes, then, that made all the difference. The fact really appeared to be that only little children without any clothes were equal. "Me" had observed that at the seaside, when bathing, you really could not tell gentlemen from common people when they were in the sea, clad merely in bathing-suits. He particularly remembered that once a waiter from the hotel had been mistaken by bathers for a French count, who was expected with much curiosity, and how the waiter had had to explain to an old

lady who entered into a conversation with him, while they were in the water, that he was only a waiter, and how the old lady had declared that "really such people should not be allowed to bathe. The sea," asserted the old lady, "was only intended for ladies and gentlemen."

Uncle Hugh was approached on the matter. "Me" desired to know when people began to be unequal. Said Hugh: "You will hear some day that 'the tailor makes the man'; but don't believe it. The tailor only disguises the man. If the tailor made the man, all the waxworks at Madame Tussaud's would be alive and kicking; but they are not, in spite of all their fine clothes they are only waxworks."

Said "Me": "If all common people were washed, would that make them ladies and gentlemen?"

"Well, no, not quite," said Hugh. "Gentility is more than skin-deep. You see, it's what they say generally."

"But if they are deaf and dumb?" suggested "Me."

"Then it would be what they think," answered Hugh.

"But you couldn't tell what deaf-and-dumb people think," said "Me."

"Then it's what they do," ventured Hugh. "Common people do common things and gentle people do gentle things, and if you put fine clothes on common people they are still common people; and if you put common clothes on gentle people they are still gentle people. The boy who stood on the burning deck was dressed as a common boy, but he did gentle things, so he was a gentleman."

Said "Me": "Mamma says that angels are all equal. If common people can be angels, then angels are all common people."

Hugh considered sagely and then said: "It takes an uncommon common person to make an angel, and if you go through Clapham Common to the House of Commons, you will find that all the commoners are uncommonly common. Besides you will notice that fine feathers make turkey-cocks," and Uncle Hugh giggled as though he had said something funny.

Rebecca, informed by Pointer, strongly disapproved of the dirty boy being placed in the carriage. Common people had no right to take such liberties with gentlefolk. This puzzled "Me" greatly. Here was Rebecca, a common person herself, quite opposed to common people.

"Are you a common person?" asked "Me."

Rebecca was startled but admitted that she was.

"Don't you like other common people?" said "Me."

Rebecca was nonplussed. Doubtfully she replied: "Yes."

"Then why are you angry with the little common boy?"

"I'm not angry," said Rebecca, "but he ought to know his place."

"What is his place?" said "Me."

"In the street," said Rebecca.

"Are all children angels?" asked "Me."

"Why, of course they are," said Rebecca.

"Then if the dirty boy was an angel they would have him in heaven, wouldn't they?" said "Me."

"What are you up to?" said Rebecca suspiciously, feeling she was being driven into a corner.

"And if they would have him in heaven, why shouldn't mamma have him in the carriage?"

"You are too clever by half," said Rebecca, finding

herself bereft of reasons. "Besides it's time you went to bed."

"Is Pointer a common man?" queried "Me."

"Well, yes, I suppose he is," admitted Rebecca.

"He was angry because the little boy was put in the carriage," said "Me."

"I should think so, indeed," protested Rebecca, hurrying the bedtime disrobing in the hope of diverting "Me's" attention.

"What kind of clothes do angels wear?" asked "Me."

Said the distracted Rebecca: "They don't wear clothes at all, they wear robes."

"Where do they get them from?" said "Me."

"How do I know?" cried Rebecca, quite beside herself and pressing "Me's" tooth-brush on him in the vain hope of stopping his busy mouth.

"Is everybody equal in heaven?" insisted "Me."

"I suppose so," sighed Rebecca.

"Then you won't be common any more there, will you?"

"I haven't thought about it," said Rebecca, "and what's more, don't you ask any more questions," and for a moment "Me's" head was hidden in his night-gown.

"What makes the little street boy common?" said "Me," emerging.

"I suppose he was born common," said Rebecca.

"Do all common people come from God?"

"Everybody comes from God."

"Was he common before he came from God?"

"How could he be?"

"Are people common after they are dead?"

"Hush!" said Rebecca. "If they are good, of course, they are not common, or anything else."

"Then all buried people are good?"

"Yes."

"Why are they good when they are dead?"

"Because we are sorry for them."

"Why aren't we sorry for them when they are alive?"

"Oh, I don't know!" cried Rebecca, distracted.

"I suppose," reflected "Me," "common people become ladies and gentlemen when they are buried." It seemed quite evident that behavior came to an end in the churchyard. There, manners, good or bad, mattered not at all.

"Are they buried in their clothes?" resumed "Me."

"No, of course not," said Rebecca. "You get into bed at once, I've had enough of you."

"Oh, that's it, then!" cried "Me." "When they leave off their clothes that makes the difference. When do people begin to be common if they are not common before they are born, and if they are angels when they are children, and if they stop being common when they are dead?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Rebecca. "Of course, babies are not common; but boys and girls are, and men and women are. But when people are dead you don't think about them being common—they are just dead—and of course, people in heaven all become different."

"Oh, yes, I see," said "Me." "They all dress alike, don't they?"

"Oh, good night!" said Rebecca.

"Is a carpenter a gentleman?" said "Me."

"Of course not," said Rebecca.

"Jesus was a carpenter," said "Me."

By this time "Me" was safely in bed and tucked up tight.

"You're a wicked boy," said Rebecca in an awed voice, "and you had better ask to be forgiven," and she turned down the gas.

"You could only tell that little boy was common by his clothes," said "Me."

"Go to sleep at once," said Rebecca crossly.

"He looked like a gentleman in his white night-gown," said "Me." "You couldn't tell the difference when mamma kissed him."

Here "Me's" brother, Sam, aged two, woke up, and began to mutter in his own private language, at the same time scowling at "Me" for disturbing his slumbers. "Me" felt sure he was saying something ungentlemanly.

"Don't be common!" said "Me," and floated away to the land of dreams.

# VI

## "TA"

SARAH TAME was my brother's nurse. My early remembrance of her was that of a tall, rather solemn and majestic woman. I had as it were to throw my head back to see her face when I spoke to her. That was forty-five years ago. I saw her in London a while since, and find that she is a very small person, some distance beneath me. I can distinctly look down on her. There was but one child in the world for Sarah Tame, and Sarah Tame was his prophet. She used to call my brother *The Prince*. The other children were just children. My brother's name being George, my father naturally called him Sam, and with equal reason Sam addressed himself as "Ta." He would never say as ordinary folk do: "I want this or that." He would say, "'Ta' wants 'Ta's' brexas," meaning breakfast. Sarah, to Sam, was "Kluklums." There are, I believe, some three hundred languages besides Volapük, but none of these would serve Sam's purposes. Those of us who had his interest at heart would try now and again to dissuade him from persisting in this new and strange speech. Sam would never argue about it; being smaller than his advisers, he had to listen; but when all was said and done he would make some remark in his unknown tongue, at which one could not take offense, not knowing what it signified, and move off about some important business. Never was there a child who had so much important business as "Ta." He

was much given to soliloquy. It was rather uncanny to hear him talk in this mysterious lingo to himself. Sarah was the only one who understood him. It was as if these two had lived in some previous existence and, meeting on this planet, communicated in a tongue which was theirs eons ago, on Mars perhaps. Sarah herself was no ordinary woman; she walked in an atmosphere of impending fate. If one should ask her to get a pocket-handkerchief, she would reply: "I'll get it if I die on the road." This was her customary phrase when performing any mission. I remember feeling somewhat awed at this way of treating a simple request, as though her blood would be on my head should death overtake her on the way. "Ta" and "Kluklums" persisted in this language of theirs until "Ta" was about eight years of age. Then their vocabulary was quite a formidable one and covered all the usual occasions and requirements of existence. My father was equal to the emergency, however, and when he returned to England one day after a couple of seasons in America he quickly perceived the profundity of "Ta's" mind, and met the situation by inventing a rival language on the spot. He adopted some of "Ta's" words but broke forth in a multitude of new ones. A torrent of unfamiliar talk flowed from him in his conversations with "Ta" and "Kluklums" which overpowered them, and for two or three days they were observed in consultations apart, in remote corners of the nursery, the garden, or the stable-yard. "Ta" seemed frowning and distraught and "Kluklums" over and over again was overheard to mutter, "if I die on the road." From that time "Ta" kept his secret language to himself. He and "Kluklums" conversed mostly by signs. Their affection and their understanding remained as deep as ever, but no

"TA," SAM SOTHERN, AGED TWO YEARS

SAM SOTHERN, AGED SEVEN YEARS

utterance of any sort was permitted to attract the vulgar gaze. When they met after a separation of a quarter of a century quite recently, "The Prince!" said Sarah. "Kluklums!" said "Ta."

For my own part, now in my mature years, I believe that "Ta" came to us with a message which he was not permitted to deliver. Who shall say that he was not a medium, and that had he persisted in giving out those strange sentences which welled up from within him, we should not now be in possession of secrets which are lost to us forever? Be that as it may, "Ta" always was possessed of a wisdom not very evidently of this world. He seemed always to have sat in the councils of the great. Even in boyhood graybeards listened to him with reverence and ancient men deferred to his opinions.

When "Ta" was first expected on this planet, I, who was then seven years old, was informed that he would one morning be found in a rhubarb-bed at the bottom of the garden of our house, "The Cedars" in Kensington, London. Consequently, it was my custom to observe this rhubarb-bed closely for any signs of this new baby. My reflections were not at all amiable toward "Ta," as I stood day after day and contemplated the large rhubarb-leaves. I did not think I quite wanted a new baby. I couldn't exactly define my ideas on the subject, but I was distinctly uneasy. At last one fine day, while I was staring at the rhubarb, I was told that "Ta" had arrived, and I was invited to go and see him. I was so angry at the deception practised upon me, for "Ta" had been born behind my back as it were, that I struggled violently with those who would have conducted me to the house. I escaped them and by devious ways retired to a secret retreat of mine in the tool-shed to brood over my wrongs.

After a while I crept up to the house and, by the back stairs, approached the room wherein lay the unconscious "Ta." I heard sounds of wailing from within and certain tender consolations were being offered which had hitherto been my sole perquisite. An overwhelming sense of injury seized me, and the undefined animosity I had felt while watching the rhubarb-bed found vent in howls of anguish and bangings against the door of the room wherein my rival lay. Anxious people came out and took hold of me. When I saw "Ta" my outcry increased, nothing would induce me to go near him. It was a long time before my mother, by tender endearments, persuaded me to first endure, then pity, then embrace the intruder, and at last to sob myself asleep with my arms about her. For days I regarded "Ta" with suspicion. He, on the other hand, observed me, as soon as he could observe anything, with stern and frowning toleration. By and by he began to speak in this new language I have mentioned. My name of Eddie he reduced to D, and in other ways he seemed to belittle me. He seldom smiled and never cried, was quite unsociable and, as I have said, talked a great deal to himself. An uncomfortable sense of "Ta's" superiority troubled me. I was beginning actually to hate him, when an event occurred which overcame me with that admiration and respect that I have felt for him ever since.

My father had given my mother a hundred and fifty pounds in Bank of England notes. These notes she had placed in a drawer in her desk. Shortly afterward my elder brother, Lytton, entered the room with the son of a neighbor who was his particular and constant playmate. These two were unusual-looking boys; both very handsome, just the same age, about seventeen.

They were constantly together. When my mother returned to the room, my brother Lytton and his friend, whose name was Peters, departed. My mother opened the drawer to get money for her household bills, and found to her dismay that more than half of the bank-notes had gone. My father was called. I remember quite well the excitement that followed. My father went off in his dog-cart to Scotland Yard, and returned with one Detective Micklejohn, a celebrated sleuth of the time. Everybody in the house was examined; the servants, male and female, the latter weeping copiously because they were suspected. Of course, no individual was suspected. The whole household, however, was searched. "Ta" and myself alone were exempt. "Kluklums" was examined with the rest, at which outrage "Ta" made some occult remarks to which "Kluklums" replied in the sign language.

Well, Detective Micklejohn was quite baffled. He could find no clew whatever. He had dismissed the servants as having nothing to do with the theft, and had for the moment concentrated his attention on my brother Lytton. It appeared that Lytton had gone to the drawer, and had taken out the bank-notes and looked at so much wealth with some awe, and then replaced the money. This he readily told the detective. My mother was in tears at the mere idea of Lytton being questioned. My father stood by, puzzled but stern. The men and women servants were gathered in a nervous crowd in the passage below. "Ta" and I watched, huddled together with "Kluklums."

"Thanks," said Micklejohn, "that's all!"

He was closeted for some time with my father and then departed. We heard that he suspected no one in

the house. But he did; he suspected my brother, Lytton, who had said nothing about Peters being in the room when he looked at the notes. Peters had taken the money, and he went about spending it recklessly. He looked so like my brother Lytton that Micklejohn got on the wrong track and was quite convinced that Lytton was the spendthrift.

He came to tell my father and mother his opinion. My mother told "Kluklums." "Kluklums" must have communicated by wireless (which was not yet invented) to "Ta," for that remarkable child came down the stairs from his nursery chanting a favorite chant of his to this effect:

"Dordy mady iddy far
Iffoo pindat madat dar
Dordy isso tindadood
Gidy iddy far effood."

Translated, this poem reads:

"God He made the little fly;
If you pinch it, it will die.
God He is so kind and good,
He gives the little fly his food."

He came down the stairs slowly and seemingly unmoved. He approached Detective Micklejohn, who was coming out of the room, followed by my weeping mother and my frowning father. He doubled up his two tiny fists and he struck that large policeman several rapid blows, at the same time pronouncing these cryptic words: "Dood itto dad peepor." Detective Micklejohn laughed. He had not yet solved a criminal mystery out of the mouths of babes.

LYTTON SOTHERN, AGED NINETEEN

"What does he say?" said Micklejohn.

"Dood itto dad peepor," reiterated "Ta."

To the amazement of the assembly, "Kluklums" cried out: "I knew it!"

"Knew what?" said my father.

"Oh, Sarah!" wept my mother.

"Ta," having delivered his ultimatum, was now trying to catch a fly on the window-pane and chanting:

"Dordy mady iddy far——"

"I see the child speaks French," said Micklejohn.

"Iffoo pindat madat dar."

"I knew it!" cried Sarah.

"Speak, woman!" said my father.

"Dood titto dad peepor," said Sarah.

"She also speaks French," said the astute Micklejohn.

"Nonsense!" cried my father impatiently. "This is the child's babble that no one but Sarah can understand. The woman is a second Rosetta Stone."

In his excitement, my father shook Sarah, who, weeping, murmured: "Dood titto dad peepor. Oh, master, 'Ta!' I knew it!"

"Sarah," said my father, "if you don't tell me at once what you mean I will bite your left ear."

This startling threat sobered Sarah instantly.

"What do those words mean?" cried my father.

"They mean," said Sarah, "'good Lytton, bad Peters,' that's what it means, if I die on the road."

"Who's Peters?" said Micklejohn.

"My son's friend who is always with him," said my mother.

"Iffoo pindat madat da," sang "Ta" at the window.

"Does he look like your son?" said the sleuth, hot on the trail.

"Yes, they are both very handsome," said my mother.

"Dordy isso tindadood," crooned "Ta," killing a fly on the pane.

"Call me a cab," hissed the detective.

"That child's intelligence is unnatural," said my mother.

"He takes after me," said my father.

"Gidy iddy fa ifood," muttered "Ta," cornering another fly.

That night as Peters was treating a crowd of foolish people at a bar, Micklejohn hit him a heavy smack on the shoulder and said quickly: "Give me that money you took from Mrs. Sothern's desk."

The wretched boy fell to the ground in a faint, and was brought to our house in handcuffs. He confessed everything. My mother wept over him; my father grew hysterical as he embraced his own boy, Lytton. No one but our own household ever knew of the theft or of the redemption of the foolish purloiner. His own people never knew. In my mother's arms, he underwent a change of heart which I know lasted for his life.

But "Ta" would never make friends with him—never! He invariably called him "Dad peepor," until the language of "Ta" and "Kluklums" was numbered among those tongues that are dead.

How "Ta" reached his conclusions concerning the real culprit has never been known. "Ta" himself, now that he has emerged far beyond the shadowland of childhood, can recall nothing of his mental processes at that time. In fact, he remembers nothing about it, save what I tell him.

"THE CEDARS," LONDON

With "Kluklums" it is different. To her "Ta" was and is a being of a different clay from that from which ordinary Londoners are made. In some other world than this, perhaps about the time of the Pharaohs I myself believe that "Ta" was a prince. To "Kluklums" "Ta" is a prince here and now.

## VII

# PRIVATE AND UNEXPECTED

It was "Ta's" birthday and arrangements had been made whereby he was to send out his own invitations, to select his own guests, to create the menu himself.

Fanny Marsh was consulted in secret. Much whispering occurred between "Kluklums" and the "Prince." Certain epistles were penned and posted; replies received and conned apart. Garments were considered, hair was curled, and at length the day arrived on which the favored guests should assemble. It had been expected by "Ta's" parents that children contiguous and adjacent would be invited, but such was not the case at all. "Ta" had arranged that the banquet should be served for two persons only, and had not divulged who the solitary guest would be. The preparations were quite extraordinary, and the resources of "Ta's" parents' establishment were taxed to their extreme limit. For example, the carriage could not be used that day, because Pointer had been persuaded to wait on the table.

Pointer had protested that he was unskilled in waiting. At this "Ta" had wept copiously, and had declared that skill mattered not at all. The thing was for Pointer to be present and since he could not bring his horse and carriage into the dining-room he must assist without such impedimenta.

The gardener, also, dressed in becoming Sunday gear,

was on hand, miserable and conscious of his hands and feet. He also was to wait at table. "Kluklums" was to be throned in a corner of the room and to look on. "Ta" had wanted her to sit at the table but a sombre prediction of her death on the road had at length reconciled him to "Kluklums's" suggestion that she should be seated in a remote nook.

The hour arrived—three o'clock on an April day. The expected guest was late and "Ta's" spirit chafed, finding vent in sundry incomprehensible utterances. The favored child, whoever he or she might be, no doubt had to come from a distance; the carriage had shed a wheel, or had encountered an omnibus, or there was a mistake in the day, or perhaps in the hour, or the little friend was taken ill.

The grown-up people in the house waited with more or less patience, mildly wondering what particular playfellow "Ta" had so signally honored as to select him or her alone as his birthday company.

"Ta" sat at his table in solitary state. Linen and flowers and plate and birthday presents made a pleasing and exciting scene. Pointer, horseless, bandy-legged and redolent of stables, shifted from one foot to the other with foolish unrest. The gardener made some extremely rural attempts at conversation such as, "Them geraniums is pretty backward, ain't they?" or "It's time to burn that tobacco in the green 'ouse," or "This 'ere rain's a fine thing for them there tulips."

Not a soul responded to these efforts and the gardener was reduced to looking at his hands with a kind of wonder as if he had never seen them before, and was now speculating as to what could possibly be their use, where they had come from, and how he should get rid of them.

Suddenly the door-bell rang. The gardener clapped his hands; Pointer said: "Now we're off!" "Kluklums" muttered "I knew it."

"Ta" stood upon his chair.

"Ta's" mother and father and sister and brother, hearing the guest had come, went into the hall to greet him or her, curiosity as to whose little child it might be having reached quite a climax.

The front door opened and to everybody's amazement there stood no child at all, but a very beautiful and distinguished actress on whom "Ta," all unsuspected, had bestowed his affections, who had received the only invitation to the party and who now, radiant and glorious, was poised, angel-like, upon the door-step.

With much laughter, and much swishing of silks, and much brushing of wisps of golden hair away from shining eyes, the lovely lady floated into the dining-room. It had been distinctly understood that not one of the family should attend this party. Save for the presence of enthroned "Kluklums," it was to be a party of two. When the suggestion had been made that "Ta" should have the sole say as to his birthday feast, naturally a notable gathering of little ones was expected; but when he had insisted upon this strange arrangement that there should be only one invitation issued, it had been accepted with proper seriousness. Especially had "Ta" declared that he and his favorite should dine alone. Therefore, all hands now withdrew while "Ta" greeted his guest. The door was closed save for the entry of viands, and for an hour or more "Ta" made no sign. No word came to the outside world as to how things progressed within the banquet hall. Pointer and the gardener flitted between the kitchen and the table in

*From a photograph taken at "The Cedars"*

EDWARD A. SOTHERN IN 1863

melancholy state, looking foolishly unused to indoor ceremonies and offering no word of comment on the proceedings.

At length the meal was ended. Pointer and the gardener withdrew, and for a space silence reigned. Then a howl of agony came from the recesses of the dining-room. Shriek after shriek of wailing and of weeping.

"Ta's" relations rushed to the scene to find the beautiful actress with her arms about him, trying to soothe him, to comfort him, to glean from him what grief overwhelmed him. For five minutes at least no syllable could be gathered from inconsolable "Ta."

"What is the matter?" cried "Ta's" mother.

"Booh-hoo-hoo!" howled "Ta," his knuckles gouging out his eyes.

"What is it?" said "Ta's" father to the beautiful actress.

"I can't imagine," said the glorious creature. She then related that "Ta" had maintained an impenetrable silence during the entire entertainment, that he had eaten no food although pressed thereto by Pointer and the gardener, that he had persisted in sucking his thumb and scowling in a most uninviting and inhospitable manner, that she had used all her arts and fascination to try and break down "Ta's" most churlish humor, and that at last he had all of a sudden let out that yell which had alarmed the house and had plunged himself into that inexplicable grief which they were now contemplating.

"Stop it!" cried "Ta's" father.

"What is the matter, darling?" cried "Ta's" mother.

"Perhaps you can explain it, Sarah," and the anxious crowd turned to "Kluklums" in her corner.

"Not if I die on the road," said that inconsequent woman.

"Do you hear me?" cried "Ta's" father, shaking him with impatience, "What's the matter? Is it a pain of some sort—toothache, stomachache, earache? Tell us what's the matter?"

"I wanted a party," wept "Ta."

"Well, you have one, haven't you?" said "Ta's" mother.

"Yes," wept "Ta," "but then—boo-hoo!"

"Well, but what?"

"Why, I thought things would happen and they didn't."

"What things?" said the lovely actress.

"What things?" said "Ta's" mother.

"Yes, what things?" cried "Ta's" father.

"Something private and unexpected," wept "Ta."

"Private and unexpected?" echoed the others. "What do you mean?"

"Ta" did not know what he meant, but the fact was that this long anticipated meeting had by no means fulfilled expectations. There had been no games, no romping about, no story-telling; the beautiful lady had talked platitudes and, with very evident effort, had tried to make conversation. "Ta" could not take any interest in what she had said nor find a responsive chord which he could strike. He had ventured one or two remarks but soon was dismayed to find his sources of small talk frozen. The pretty lady babbled away, quite believing that she was delightful and amusing, but her prattle was so much Greek to "Ta." Minute by minute the feast sped by, and one sweet illusion after another vanished into air. Here was no playfellow, no comrade,

only a grown-up person who laboriously talked nonsense. What was there to do but weep, to lift up one's voice in protest and despair? "Boo-hoo-hoo!"

This most playful and fascinating Rosalind, this romping and most understanding tomboy of the last pantomime, was nothing but a grown-up female incapable of games and who criticised one's cold in the head, advised concerning one's finger-nails, inquired after one's progress at school, and seemed to have no conception whatever of Indians, cowboys, and pirates. This was the public and expected behavior of all grown-up people. The private and the unexpected so fondly anticipated, yet so undefined and impalpable, a very cobweb of the fancy, something woven from limelight and forest glades, and music and dancing feet and laughter and sweet nothings, of strings of sausages filched by the mischievous clown, of battered policemen, of Pantaloon finding a red-hot poker in his pocket, of Columbine and Harlequin, all—all had vanished in this commonplace talk. What should one do but weep? "Boo-hoo!"

The pretty lady was, however, equal to the occasion.

"Private and unexpected?" cried she. "Then here we go!" and catching up her frock she began to dance a hornpipe—that very hornpipe which the tomboy in the pantomime had danced when informed that his wicked uncle had been eaten by a dragon, and that instead of being a poor newsboy he was the long-lost child of the Emperor. That disclosure had gone at once to his ten toes, and he had danced like mad for as many minutes. And like mad did he now dance in a truly private and unexpected manner, and "Ta" stopped crying and began to laugh and to jump up and down

and when, for a climax, the lovely lady actually turned a handspring and sat on the floor, breathless but bubbling with laughter, life began to seem reasonable once more.

"Ta" has passed a number of birthdays since that fifth birthday, but never has anything happened quite so entirely private and unexpected as this. That tomboy is a very old lady now, and no doubt her dancing days are over. Maybe, however, she will read these lines and remember.

## VIII

# "RASHER"

THE friendship of "Me" and the jam-faced boy might have pursued its calm and Arcadian course until cemented by the experiences and trials of manhood had it not been that Fate the fiddler had injected, for some purpose of its own, a volcanic element in the person of a new and unexpected cousin of "Me," the child of "Me's" mother's sister. "Me" had recently made the acquaintance of those seven devils which were turned into the herd of swine, and caused them to run down a steep place into the sea. A short experience of this new cousin convinced "Me" that these same seven evil spirits had entered into the frame of this entirely superfluous red-headed Irish infant who now came, or rather erupted, on the scene.

The parents of this terrible creature, being extremely poor, were on their way to Australia where the father, an Irish physician, hoped to find fortune more kind. The father, mother, and eight children arrived at "Me's" house one afternoon to partake of tea and discuss the prospects of their emigration with "Me's" mother. The devil-possessed boy with red hair was the only male child. Seven very beautiful and ever-smiling sisters did not suffice to keep the evil one from perpetual uproar, or from a silence ominous and portentous of ill.

Tea time and the family from Ireland arrived. The table groaned with specially prepared cakes and dainties, and "Me's" mother hovered angel-like over the cere-

mony. When the elders had been served: "What will you have?" said "Me's" mother to the one of seven devils.

"Rasher!" cried the possessed.

"Rasher?" said "Me's" mother. "What does the child mean?"

"No, no!" said his own mother. "Cake, beautiful cake; you must have cake."

"Rasher!" again cried the red-headed infant.

Said his father: "He means bacon. He wants bacon." Then to the child sternly: "There is no bacon on the table, you must eat cake."

"Rasher!" howled the son of Satan, "Rasher!" and began to weep tears of rage, and screw two stained fists into his eyes, and to squirm in a fearful manner on his chair.

"He can have 'rasher' if he wants it," said "Me's" mother.

"No," said the father of the imp, "he shall not have 'rasher.' He shall eat cake or eat nothing!" and he placed a large piece of cake on "Rasher's" plate—for "Rasher" he was called by us from this moment. "Rasher's" father was a man of small ceremony, and he gave "Rasher" a clout on the head at the same moment that he helped him to cake, thus illustrating the fact that good fortune is closely attended by ill.

"Rasher" refused to eat the cake. His seven lovely sisters smiled upon him; "Me's" mother said he was a darling; his own mother begged him to be good. "Me" and his small sister and brother gazed in open-eyed wonder and some fear at the fiery-haired newcomer. Sullen, silent, lowering, "Rasher" seemed to use up the cake. "Me," who was quite fascinated by him, observed that

not a single crumb passed "Rasher's" lips. The other children eagerly stuffed themselves with the feast. Their elders forgot "Rasher" in serious contemplation of the future and of the expedition to the antipodes. "Me's" mother told him after a while to ring the bell, which caused "Me" to pass near "Rasher's" chair. Amid the uproar of the general talk, he heard "Rasher" say in a low, horrid tone: "I'm rubbin' it into the floor, I am! I'm rubbin' it into the floor," and sure enough he had dropped the sticky plum cake, morsel by morsel, onto the carpet, and with one small leg stretched out, was crushing the mess into the rug.

"Me" told his mother, and a general examination brought down on "Rasher" such a chorus of denunciation as would have caused any honest boy to blink. Not so "Rasher." He was a hardened criminal. He stood stolid and determined on other evil courses.

"Go in the corner!" cried his father. "Stand in the corner and don't dare to move until I forgive you," and he lifted the horrible urchin bodily into the shameful niche.

Shortly the tea-party broke up, and all hands adjourned to the drawing-room. "Me" lingered behind, fascinated by "Rasher's" daring and lawbreaking spirit. He approached fearfully to where the wicked boy stood in durance. To his horror he heard "Rasher" muttering under his breath, constantly, unceasingly, venomously, rapidly, these awful words: "Damn devil! Damn devil! Damn devil!" over and over again, his face close to the corner of the wall. Such abandonment to sin had never entered into "Me's" domain before. He crept abashed from the room. Evil-doers surely find great gratification in the breaking of commandments

and the rebellious "Rasher" glutted his anger and fed his sullen soul by muttering "Damn devil!" for a full half-hour.

When his father suddenly concluded it was time to forgive him, "Me" was deputed to convey the glad tidings to "Rasher." With some trepidation he approached the culprit who still stood obstinately in the corner. As "Me" drew near he observed that "Rasher" was engaged in stamping more cake into the carpet, and varied the ejaculations of "Damn devil!" with the baleful assertion, "I'm rubbin' it into the floor, I am!"

"You are forgiven," said "Me." "Come up-stairs."

"Hell!" said "Rasher," and, pronouncing this terrible word, he marched to the drawing-room.

The seven sisters endeavored to shower him with endearments, but he squirmed and resisted and kept to himself.

By and by "Me" learned that the jam-faced boy was below, and asked to be allowed to go and play with him.

"Yes," said "Me's" mother, "and you shall take dear 'Rasher' to play with you."

"Me" took "Rasher's" unwilling hand and conducted him to the nursery. Shortly the jam-faced lad appeared. "Me" received him with affection but was distracted to observe that a fierce enmity immediately flamed up between "Rasher" and his lowly friend. Several games were begun and abandoned; "Rasher" would take no part, until "Me" suggested "Indians." Here "Rasher" pricked up his ears. Much tracking of foes by their footmarks and scalping of slain redskins followed, when "Rasher" suggested burning captives at the stake. The idea was greeted with acclamation and

shortly, after a great conflict, "Me" and his jam-faced friend were bound securely to the rocking-horse. Now "Rasher" exhibited a very terrible and ferocious glee. He piled newspapers and picture-books about the feet of his victims, who, meanwhile, depicted proper and historical stoicism. What was their terror, however, when "Rasher" lighted a match and set fire to the newspapers; then, screaming with hideous laughter, ran from the room and slammed and locked the door!

"Me" and the jam-faced one yelled and cried for help, while "Rasher" laughed and laughed outside the door. The two bound to the rocking-horse struggled as might Mazeppa have done to free themselves, and managed to drag the wooden steed to the other side of the room. The paper blazed furiously and inevitably would have set fire to the house had not "Rasher's" unholy rejoicing been heard below and the whole household been brought hotfoot to the scene.

A vast confusion followed. The flames were extinguished with rugs, and "Rasher" was then and there beaten by his father until he howled with pain. "Me" and his friend were pale with dread and trembled with excitement. This was playing "Indians" with a vengeance.

"Me's" mother begged that "Rasher" should be taken away at once to Australia, which continent "Me" was relieved to remember was on the extreme other side of the world. His father took charge of him. His whole family, weeping and protesting and berating, went their way, never to be seen by "Me" again.

"Rasher" became a mounted policeman in Australia. No doubt it takes a "Rasher" to catch a "Rasher."

The budding friendship between the jam-faced boy and "Me" was alas! uprooted, for never was that humble child allowed to play more in such alarming company. Thus the evil that "Rasher" did lived after him. Certainly no good will be interred with his bones.

## IX

# "THE MUSIC OF THE SPHERES"

Uncle Hugh sat in the sunlight smoking a large cigar. His eyes were closed, but it was very evident that he was awake, for smoke came from him in great blue clouds as though he were a man-of-war.

"Me" approached with much joyful noise but was surprised when Uncle Hugh raised his arm in admonition and said: "Hush! Listen!"

There was no sound. The day was calm, the garden was silent.

"What is it?" whispered "Me," prepared for the attack of savages from any quarter.

"Hush!" repeated Uncle Hugh, his eyes still closed. "I am singing."

"Singing!" murmured "Me," much mystified.

"Sit on the grass," said Uncle Hugh, "close your eyes tight. Keep quite still and listen to the music of the Spheres."

"Me" did as he was told, but heard no sound. "Who are the Spheres?" he queried after a while, with a vague notion that they were of the "Christy Minstrel" family, "and what do they sing?"

"The most wonderful music in the world," said Uncle Hugh.

"I can hear nothing," said "Me."

"No, that's just it," said Uncle Hugh, "you can't hear it, you only feel it. Hush! Let us sit still without winking, while we count a thousand and nineteen and a half.

"Now," said Uncle Hugh, when the mystic number was completed, "now, we are all right again. Whenever you are worried and can't see your way out, close your eyes and listen, listen to the music of the Spheres."

"Did you ever hear it?" said "Me."

Uncle Hugh did not reply for quite a while, then he said: "Yes, once or twice at sea, at night."

"What was it like?" said "Me," a general idea of hand-organs and penny whistles and anthems in his cranium.

Said Uncle Hugh, after another pause: "I don't quite know. I think it feels like pity and love and—yes, it feels like hunger, too."

This was very strange talk, and for a long time "Me" did not understand.

"The difficulty is this," continued Uncle Hugh, "we all talk too much. Two people cannot meet without talking —talking continually—at all costs they must keep it up. If they stop for a moment they are wretched and disconcerted. We talk so constantly that we can't think. You will notice that the animals don't talk, yet they communicate. They rejoice, they sorrow. I tell you we stunt our intelligence by so much talking. Sit still now and then and listen, and you will learn strange things."

Left to himself, "Me" considered deeply. Frequently thereafter would he sit by the fountain in the garden and, sure enough, in due time the world opened its lips and sang, and "Me" lifted up his voice in the silence and sang, and the rhubarb-bed, and the huge black cedar-tree, and the splashing water, and the green grass, —they all sang. And the "Sphere family" would come floating across the lawns singing the most wonderful songs in words quite different from any words yet in-

troduced into "Me's" vocabulary either by Mr. and Mrs. Snelling or any one else; but all the same quite easily understood and telling of things never heard of before and yet entirely familiar. And the curious thing was that you did not want to tell these experiences to anybody, because it was as clear as day that if you uttered them in words they would cease to be.

Then, too, there was another thing about it. You were quite sure that these songs were sung to you in confidence, not to be repeated to anybody ever. That was why the language was no language, and why you felt rather shy and almost guilty when somebody would say: "A penny for your thoughts." A penny, indeed! Why, you wouldn't sell them for a thousand pennies, for you had a curious certainty that as they passed your lips they would turn into ashes. They would die, fade as the leaves of the flowers when summer has spoken. All this was a little puzzling and rather like living two distinct lives and having two sets of acquaintances who were not on each other's visiting lists. Thus, wordless thoughts and silent songs found sanctuary in the mind of "Me." Thither would they come speeding in the most unexpected manner, bursting open the doors and rushing in as though they were escaping from the noise and turmoil of the world; snuggling up in this quiet corner to rest in the shade and saying to "Me" in the language which was no language:

Listen! Listen! while we sing, or while we deliver you our message. We are worn out seeking shelter, for the earth is so full of noise.

"Why do those two men shout so at each other?" inquired "Me" of Uncle Hugh one day, concerning two

men in the street who were not more than six inches apart but who were yelling as though they were, each of them, on a separate and distant mountain.

"They are shouting," replied Uncle Hugh, "so as to conceal from each other what they are thinking about."

"But if they don't want to tell what they think, why do they talk at all?" asked "Me."

"If they don't talk," said Uncle Hugh, "each is afraid the other will consider him unintelligent or, perhaps, unkind, and they believe that the louder they talk the more they disguise the fact that they really have not anything to say; so they shout the thing they don't mean and don't want to say in order that each one shall be persuaded that the other *does* mean and *does* want to say it."

"And *are* they persuaded?" asked "Me."

"Not at all!" said Uncle Hugh. "Wait here and listen to what they say when they part. You stand there, I'll stand here.

"Well?" said Uncle Hugh, when he and "Me" joined forces again, "what did your man say after he left the other shouting: 'Happy days'?"

Said "Me": "He muttered, 'Fool!'"

"Ha!" said Uncle Hugh, "he was saying what he thought. My man, who left calling out, 'Be good,' said between his teeth: 'Liar!'"

"How awful!" said "Me."

"I told you," commented Uncle Hugh, "everybody talks too much. It was not necessary for those two men to talk, and, having talked, they are worse off than they would be had they been silent. Mum's the word!"

Winter came shortly, and many poor people were out of employment. Frequently some of these would pa-

rade the streets; generally a band of ten or twelve men, poorly clad and shivering, would walk slowly through the fog chanting in unison: "We have no work to do! We have no work to do! We're all frozen out, and have no work to do!" Pennies would be flung to these from house windows, and the unhappy waifs would melt into the mist, their pitiful chorus growing faint and fainter as they passed along. Then, sometimes, would come a man and a woman holding hands, and hanging on to them eight or more children, usually arranged according to their height, growing small by degrees and miserably less as they decreased in size from the mother down to the littlest babe. These, too, would chant: "We have no work to do! We have no work to do! We all are wet and hungry, and have no work to do!"

Peering from his bright nursery into the dim street, "Me" obtained his first glimpse of such a group. First came their woful song upon the yellow fog; then their gray forms, like ghosts, floated into view.

"Come to tea!" said Rebecca.

"Hush!" replied "Me," "I am listening."

"Listening? To what?"

"The music of the Spheres!" whispered "Me," for surely this was the "Sphere family." "Here they come!" What was it that clutched at "Me's" heart and brought tears into his eyes if these were not they? "It sounds like pity and like love and—yes, it sounds like hunger, too."

"Me" wrapped a penny in a piece of newspaper and flung it from the window. There was much scrambling in the mud to recover it, and much touching of caps in acknowledgment.

"Why do they touch their caps?" inquired "Me" of Rebecca.

"Because you are a young gentleman," said she.

"Oh, yes, I see!" said "Me." Then to the astonished Rebecca: "Why am I a young gentleman?"

Rebecca's reason seemed to give way under the strain of this query. She stood still and open-mouthed for a space, then she said in a hushed tone, "Well I never!" and went away.

"Me" listened to the song of the "Sphere family" until it sank into the silence of the bleak afternoon. He stood at the window for a long while. At length came the time for prayers, and three small figures knelt at three small beds and raised three small voices in supplication.

But the proceedings were suddenly interrupted, for "Me" arose and said to Rebecca: "Do they pray?"

"Who?" said that much-troubled female.

"Why, the 'Spheres'!"

"Who?"

"The 'Spheres,' the people I threw the penny to."

"Of course they do. All people pray."

"Do they say: 'Give us this day our daily bread'?"

"Why do you want to know?" said Rebecca, past experience making her suspicious.

"Because if they pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' why are they hungry?"

"Perhaps they are wicked people!" said Rebecca.

"Are all hungry people wicked?" asked "Me."

Again Rebecca's reason forsook her, and again she sought safety in flight.

"I suppose," considered "Me," "that food makes people good."

This seemed fairly evident, for was there not much

talk in church about feasts—the feast of this and the feast of that? No doubt all the wicked people were gathered together, and fed into a state of repentance and righteousness.

Why, of course it was so. "Feed the hungry!" Only last Sunday the old white-haired clergyman had repeated it at least twenty times during his sermon. Indeed "Me" had become rather nervous and embarrassed, for the clergyman had distinctly pointed his finger directly at him when he had exclaimed: "Feed the hungry" the fifteenth time, and the injunction had quite taken "Me's" mind off his dinner that afternoon.

By the railings of Kensington Gardens sat a blind man who had neither legs nor arms. A very old dog sat by his side with a tin mug in his mouth. On the blind man's breast was a placard on which was printed in shaky letters: "Pity the blind." Rain or shine they sat there, silent, still, forever listening. If you dropped a coin in the tin mug the dog would lean his head toward the blind man and push him. The blind man's face would flush as he heard the sound of the coin, then his lips would move but one never heard him speak.

One day "Me" contemplated the silent pair for some time, and then whispered to the blind man: "Can you hear it?"

"You mean the music?" said the blind man.

"Yes," said "Me," hushed and expectant.

"What does it sound like?"

"Oh, all sorts of things," said the blind man. "Sometimes it sounds like the sea, sometimes like Southampton, where I was born, sometimes like the Crimea, where I lost my legs and arms. Just now it sounds like beefsteak and onions."

"That," said Uncle Hugh later, "is his particular idea of heaven, and as a matter of fact it is on the whole sane and modest enough. You or I might find it difficult to express beefsteak and onions in strains of music, but each of us has his peculiar ecstasy. The blind man will perceive heaven in extracting from you and me beefsteak and onions, while we, who are blessed with sight, will reach the heavenly sphere through feeding beefsteak and onions to the blind. No doubt there is music either way if one could only hear it. There is a difference between closing your eyes and losing them altogether. People who have lost their eyes are great listeners."

"I suppose so," said "Me." "Oh!" he continued, "I saw them yesterday."

"Who?" said Uncle Hugh.

"The 'Sphere family,'" said "Me." "I saw them and I heard them sing."

"Yes?" said Uncle Hugh, not in the least surprised. "What song did they sing?"

"They came along the street in the mist holding each other's hands, and they sang: 'We have no work to do! We have no work to do! We all are wet and hungry, we have no work to do.'"

"Oh, yes, I see," said Uncle Hugh.

"Yes," said "Me," "I remembered that the music of the 'Spheres' sounded like 'Pity and love and hunger,' so I knew them at once."

"And what did you do?" said Uncle Hugh.

"I think I cried," said "Me," unashamed.

"Good!" said Uncle Hugh. "Then you felt pity."

"Oh, yes!" whispered "Me," "and love and hunger, too."

"What else?" said Uncle Hugh.

"I threw them a penny," said "Me." "It was all I had."

Uncle Hugh lighted a cigar.

"When you grow up," said he, "you will learn to smoke, and as you smoke you will indulge in contemplation, and as you contemplate you will admit that if you have only a penny a penny is a great deal, and you will wonder why it is that you, who once were so filled with love and pity that you gave all, now pass the hungry by and see them not, and then you will remember that it is because you no longer pause to listen, to listen——"

"To the 'Sphere family'?" said "Me."

"Yes," assented Uncle Hugh, "to the 'Sphere family.'"

"I think I shall always hear them," said "Me."

"We will see," sighed Uncle Hugh.

"What music wakens the drowsy noon?
It swells and sighs in the swaying trees.
The whispering grasses bear the tune
To the far-off bell and the droning bees—
From honied lands—over bitter seas;
'Neath the golden sun; or the silver moon;
On the morning's breath; on the evening breeze;
We shall gather its burthen—late or soon.

"From the darkling brow of the pine-clad hill,
A note of the northwind sweet and clear
Makes the pulses leap, and the herd stand still—
'Tis the Goat-god's reed! from the haunted mere
Comes the lilt of laughter now far—now near—
Where Dryads dance to the Piper's thrill:
As he lolls on the lap of Night to hear
The plaint of Echo, from rock and rill.

"Yet hark! 'Tis no strain of earthly things—
It floats from the realms where the planets, hung

In highest Heaven, may brush the wings
Of choristers ever and ever young—
The song of songs we have never sung
Sings not of the sorry world—it sings
Of dreamful valleys the gods among—
And the Harper harps on a thousand strings.

"Singer of songs, whoe'er you be,
Lord of the Heaven or Piper Pan;
To your touch, in an awful ecstasy,
Tremble the chords in the heart of man.
The love of our long-lost lay began
When the world was young and the soul was free.
'Twould break its bondage, the stars to scan
For the source of its ancient melody."

# X

# AMONG THE GODS

"WHEN I was a god," said Uncle Hugh ("Me" did not know it at the moment but Hugh alluded to his divinity among the Haidar savages)—"When I was a god, I found that the scantier my raiment the more ample was my authority. Cupid in knickerbockers is no longer an archer; one would scoff at a Venus enveloped in furbelows; Adonis in a frock coat barters his godhead for shadows sartorial; Mercury, his pinions pump-prisoned, becomes a pedestrian; top-hats will not adjust themselves to aureoles, while that goddess renounces heaven who dons a petticoat."

These reflections were projected by "Me's" inquiry as to why Cupid, as portrayed on the valentines in the shop-windows, was innocent of garments. Cupid's condition at Christmas time was even more pitiful than at the feast of Saint Valentine. To have to handle one's bow and arrows in the snow would be trying to toes and fingers, to say nothing of noses.

"It's quite cold in February," remarked "Me."

Hugh admitted that it was. "But about the 14th of February," said he, "the birds begin to seek their mates. It is Nature's pairing time, and, long before Saint Valentine appeared on the scene, boys and girls observed the sap rising in the trees and the birds awing, and you would be astonished to know how lonely a fellow can be about the middle of February."

"Don't gods feel the cold?" inquired "Me."

"Rather," said Uncle Hugh. "That's why they keep out of the way. You see it's terribly tiresome having to go about so thinly clad and that, too, entirely for the good of other people. Cupid, I'm sure, must have a hard time to continue mischievous when he has to dance to keep his feet warm and blow on his fingers before he can draw his bow."

"How does it feel when he hits you?" asked "Me."

"Couldn't say," responded Uncle Hugh, "because he never *did* hit *me*. I am told, however, that one feels excellently foolish, and from observing the wounded and assisting the maimed, I should judge that the arrows are dipped in some kind of drug which dulls the understanding."

"Oh, then you have seen people who were hit?" said "Me."

"Yes," answered Uncle Hugh. "I knew one man who used to be hit regularly once a week."

"Did he bleed?" said "Me."

"Well, he was bled," replied Uncle Hugh. "His 'silver skin laced with his golden blood,' so to speak."

"Why doesn't Cupid ever grow up?" wondered "Me."

"I've often thought of that myself," said Uncle Hugh. "I suppose it's because if he were grown up he would not be capable of the senseless, irresponsible, reprehensible, reckless, purposeless, and generally idiotic conduct which now distinguishes him. The only consideration which makes his behavior pardonable is that he doesn't know any better. He's childish, you see, so he is forgiven. Then, too, the complaint for which he is held responsible is of so ridiculous and tragic a nature that there must be a scapegoat of some sort whom we can blame for the

folly and the wretchedness in which we become involved."

"Does it hurt much then?" said "Me."

"Like the very devil, I'm told," said Uncle Hugh.

"What *is* a scapegoat?" asked "Me."

"A scapegoat was a goat on whose head the ancient Jews symbolically placed the sins of the people; after which he was suffered to escape into the wilderness, and there, because you and I and Rebecca have misbehaved ourselves, the goat dies of thirst and hunger, and then you and I and Rebecca are as good as new. In the same manner, if I murder my wife for love of her, I blame Cupid and escape the gallows."

"I think Rebecca's in love!" declared "Me."

"Yes?" said Uncle Hugh. "What makes you think so?"

"I saw her kiss Biggs," said "Me."

"Let us not be hasty," commented Uncle Hugh. "It may have been merely a collision, an accident, a losing of the balance, as it were. She may have regained the perpendicular. Then, too, at this time of year seasonable infirmities are diagnosed as love. Hay-fever for example; an inflamed head is often mistaken for a combustible heart, and people rush at conclusions only to abandon them. Thus Rebecca and Biggs, who one moment are assured that they two should be one, the next moment are convinced that two into one won't go."

Uncle Hugh's philosophy was somewhat involved and confusing this morning, and "Me" was left to marvel that so common a thing as a kiss could possibly be the cause of so much reasoning. Love seemed a very simple matter: merely to want and to be comforted; to be tired and have arms about one; to long for, and to be satis-

fied; to fall asleep confident, secure and happy in the knowledge that some other understands everything, forgives everything, bears everything. Why, then, so many words and such mysterious suggestions of disaster and sorrow and danger? If Cupid was a little child, love must be innocent enough. Uncle Hugh's talk left a sense of doubt and shadow and unrest. There was a darker side to this kissing. It was not always a happy and laughable matter.

"What is love?" demanded "Me" of Rebecca.

"Good gracious!" said that startled woman, "what a question! Why," continued she, having thought a moment and smiling to herself, "love is getting married, and having children of one's own, and keeping a greengrocer's shop just off Baker Street."

This was certainly a most particular definition, and yet it seemed that something must have been left out; for the chief impression made by it was one of vegetables, chiefly cauliflower.

"What is love?" inquired "Me" of Fanny Marsh, the cook. Fanny Marsh was engaged in basting a joint which was revolving on a spit before the fire. She turned toward "Me" with a very red face, and with a large ladle of gravy in her right hand.

"Love," said she, after a pause, "is being beaten every Saturday night." Then she poured the gravy over the joint and wiped her eyes with her other hand. "Me's" heart smote him, for he recalled that Rebecca had once whispered that Fanny Marsh had not been happy in her marriage; therefore, he rushed at Fanny Marsh, and threw his arms about her ample person and declared that he did not mean it, although what he did not mean was by no means apparent.

"What is love?" inquired "Me" from Johnson, the coachman.

Johnson was standing in the stable-yard chewing a straw and watching the grooming of some horses with critical eye.

"Love?" said he. "Why, you see that 'orse bite that mare on the neck; that's love! You see them pigeons cooin' and rubbin' their bills together? That's love! You see that cock acrying 'cock-a-doodle-doo'? That's love. Love's what keeps everything and everybody on the move; it's love that makes the world go round, and makes us all want to go round the world."

This was a long speech for Johnson, who was one of the great silent men of history, and whose conversation mostly consisted of "Gee-up," or "Come over," or "Whoa, mare!" consequently "Me" was deeply impressed by this oration.

Up to now inquiry had resulted in three distinct and unrelated impressions: cauliflower, being beaten, and perpetual motion. None of these nor all of them together appeared to fill the mental void created by the word "love."

In the neighborhood of "Me's" house was a straggling thoroughfare called "Lovers' Lane." Once it had been in the country, but London had surrounded it. Hedges still struggled to exist on either side of the narrow way. But it was rather a birdless and bedraggled paradise. Gloomy and distracted young men and voluble young women strolled here at dusk; waists were encircled and hands were held, but the general influence of the locality seemed to be dismal and joyless.

"Like the very devil," Uncle Hugh had replied when asked if Cupid's arrows hurt much. These, then, were the wounded and the maimed.

"Hello! Here's a wedding!" said Uncle Hugh as he and "Me" approached an excited crowd on the pavement. A number of gayly dressed people came out of the church; then, walking on a red carpet and weeping copiously, came the bride, and the groom pretending he didn't see anybody. Some of the people wept, also, and some looked very solemn or angry. There was much commiseration from the crowd. Some rice was thrown by a forlorn, thin woman; a slipper launched by a sad man. The carriage door slammed, and the unhappy couple drove away.

"Was that love?" said "Me."

"No," said Uncle Hugh, "that was marriage."

"But marriage is love, isn't it?" said "Me."

"Occasionally," said Uncle Hugh.

"Why did they throw things at the bride and bridegroom?" inquired "Me."

"Well," answered Uncle Hugh, laughing, "it's well to begin as one may have to continue, and it is the part of wisdom to acquire powers of resistance early in the game. First rice, then slippers, then saucepans; one must proceed gradually; besides saucepans are not thrown in public, it's bad form.

"What's the matter now?" remarked Uncle Hugh, as they arrived at Westminster Bridge and encountered another gathering through which policemen made way bearing something on a stretcher which was placed in an ambulance and driven away.

"What is it?" asked Uncle Hugh of a man in the crowd.

"Love!" said the man. "Drowned herself."

"Me" clung in fear to Uncle Hugh. "This was terrible. Was love so cruel as all this?"

EDWARD H. SOTHERN, AGED NINE YEARS

On the way home a street preacher was holding forth to a number of persons who regarded him with open mouths and wondering eyes; apparently hearing without listening. He, too, seemed to talk without much conviction, and as if he had learned by heart what he was saying.

"Love one another!" cried the preacher. "Love one another!" he commanded again, and yet again.

"Me" quite expected the listeners to embrace each other on the spot or to otherwise respond to the man's invitation, but nobody moved.

"Love one another!" he cried again.

"Will they do it?" whispered "Me."

"I think it most unlikely," answered Uncle Hugh. "You see it isn't customary. We all expect to be loved, but to love in return puts one to considerable inconvenience."

"We will now take up a collection for the heathen," said the preacher, at which the crowd melted rapidly away.

"Why does he want money for the heathen?" asked "Me."

"Well, you see the heathen are more or less contented," replied Hugh. "Love, in the strictest sense, doesn't trouble them greatly; so we feel called upon to go among them and tell them all about love as we understand it. We persuade them to love instead of eat one another; but they reply that they eat one another because of their love—a rather unanswerable argument; for, as a matter of fact, if you eat your friend, or even your enemy, you and he become as one."

Said "Me": "Uncle Hugh, when you were a god did you forgive people their sins?"

"Well, I never admitted that they had any sins," pondered Hugh, "any more than a ship has when it is under the weather; it's at the mercy of the waves, isn't it?"

"But then it has a rudder," said "Me."

"That's true," replied Hugh, "and a man at the wheel who does the best that he knows. He would not wreck the vessel if he could help it, for the vessel's life is *his* life."

"Yes," said "Me," "and then he has to think of the lives of all the other people on board. I suppose he'd stick to the wheel until he died?"

"Of course he would!" said Hugh.

"Why would he do that?" said "Me."

"Courage!" said Hugh.

"Oh!" said "Me," "I thought it might be love!"

Hugh regarded "Me" in silence for a moment, then he said, looking at the sky: "You're right, that's what it would be—love."

"The gods of yesteryear are fled!
Dan Cupid solitary stays;
And only shows his puzzled head
At Christmas time and wedding-days.

"In drafty, dim museum hall,
A Parian Psyche, all forlorn,
Upon her dreary pedestal,
For Zephyr waits from night to morn.

"There Aphrodite stands aloof
'Twixt Hercules and Dian's dogs,
The Fateful Sisters weave their woof
In lexicons and catalogues.

"Silenus gone from bad to worst,
Grown marble-hearted in despair,
Through arid centuries of thirst,
Now greets us with a stony stare.

"Fled are the gods of yesteryear!
No nymph, in times so commonplace,
May flout Olympian Jupiter,
Nor meet Adonis face to face.

"Nor hope to see the love-sick moon
Stoop down to kiss a sleeping lad;
Nor fly the wind-swept rushes' tune
Lest sight of Pan should make her mad.

"Fain would we suffer goodman Puck!
Fain bear the pranks of graceless Mab;
To oust the gods not mends our luck;
And spriteless worlds are dreary drab.

"The gods of yesteryear, alack!
Have gone for ay beyond our gates;
Nor prayers nor threats will bring us back
Their human loves and human hates.

"Ne'er shall we stray with Proserpine
Upon her hero-dappled mead,
To see that twilight region shine
With forms of the heroic dead.

"Could tongue-tied Echo break her spell,
Her fond loquacity renew,
What stories she would have to tell
Of Zeus and his unbridled crew.

"How gods as cuckoos, streams, and snakes,
Disguised themselves to conquer ladies;
How plucking a narcissus makes
You whisked away by hateful Hades.

"How Venus turned a shepherd's head,
In sandal shoon and rustic bodice;
And how he bounded out of bed,
To find his shepherdess a goddess.

"Our times afford no such disguise,
Silk hats, French fashions, and umbrellas
Won't do: while kidnapped Deities
May phone 'Hello' from Hell to Hellas.

"Garbed in the gauze of ancient Greece
Immortals were for mortals taken,
Here what with weather and police
No wonder we are God-forsaken.

"The gods are fled! Their day is done,
We treat them now with scorn; but oddly
The wise declare, since they are gone,
A godless world at last is godly.

"Fallen their fanes, their altars cold;
Yet, from the mist of tor and glen,
Their watch and ward, as kept of old,
Still lingers in the steps of men.

"Yea! If the gods their faces hide
From this ingrate, prosaic time,
Though lost to sight, they yet abide,
By reason slain, they live in rhyme.

"But yesteryear they kept their state
With Faun and Dryad, sprite and fay,
And wistfully we whisper Fate,
Would yesteryear were yesterday."

# XI

## "THE BLESSEDS"

It is on the very first page of my remembrance that I see myself held up in my nurse's arms to look into a pair of gray eyes which twinkle like the sun. There is a blaze of light and a great many people about. Some are in beautiful clothes, and some are rough people in shirt sleeves. I am on the stage of the Haymarket Theatre in London in 1863. The eyes that twinkle are those of my father. He is made-up for his part of "Lord Dundreary," and is there before the beginning of the play to take a final look at the scene, and my brother and sister and I have been brought behind the foot-lights that he may say good night to "The Blesseds."

It was as a child of three years or so that I began first to be aware of my father. My mother used to drive him frequently to the theatre from our house in Kensington. Sometimes my brother Lytton and I would be taken with her. I recall well the refreshment bar in front of the house, with sponge-cake under glass cases and all sorts of exciting things tied up in paper and gay ribbons. Held in my nurse's arms, I would help myself to these delicacies aided and abetted by the beautiful barmaid; later we would proceed through mysterious passages to greet "Lord Dundreary."

I remember perfectly my curiosity at the long, black whiskers. Indeed my recollection of my father begins with his countenance thus disguised. (It is at a much

later date that he dawns upon me in his proper person) whiskers, eye-glass, black hair parted in the middle, and with one eyebrow curiously higher than the other.

When we were old enough to witness the play, it was his great delight to introduce remarks during the performance which alluded to us but which the audience would think part of the comedy. Especially would he mention our names, as "I wonder what Eddy would say to that?" This invariably sent me down to the floor, to hide in trepidation and strange glee, and up again, half an inch at a time, to see if any one were looking at me.

All my father's acting at this time was not confined to the stage. Our garden at "The Cedars" was a very land of romance, and here, in nooks and corners and rockeries and on the lawns, "The Blesseds" enacted many a fairy-tale from "Jack and the Beanstalk" to "King Arthur and the Round Table." As a war-horse, or an ogre, or a dragon, or a witch, my father lent much terror and realism to these occasions. The princes and princesses of story-books trod these lawns and here love, who respects neither persons nor years, first undid me. Here was I called upon to display in real life those qualities of which heroes are made.

"Hello, 'Buggins the Builder,'" said my father one fine day. My playmate's name was Burgett, but forever after we called him "Buggins the Builder." He was not a builder, nor had any of his ancestors been builders. The alliteration no doubt pleased my father. Be that as it may, Gus Burgett, who was neither Buggins nor a builder, was henceforth "Buggins the Builder."

Old Mr. Burgett père was poor, and when a rich relative, for some reason or another, sent his small daughter,

Eva Tilly Edward II. Sam

"THE BLESSEDS" AT RAMSGATE

Tillie, the sister of Gus, five pounds for Christmas, there was some excitement afoot. My friend Gus was quick to see the possibilities of so considerable a sum of money. We were about the same age—that is, between seven and eight. Gus came over to play with me the day after the gold had arrived. He had brought Tillie with him. Tillie was about nine years of age and looked like an apple. Hand in hand they approached me in the garden.

"I thay!" said Gus—he lisped badly and also suffered from a perpetual "sniff"—"I thay!" said he, "Tillie hath five pounds! Uncle Horathe gave it to her. If you marry her the sayth you and I can have the money."

Tillie looked down at her toes; she was actually coy. I had heard in a dim way that money was a useful thing to have, but no desire for it had as yet assailed me; nevertheless my small bosom began to be torn asunder. I had heard, too, of marriage and of being given in marriage, but I had not expected to face such an ordeal for some time to come.

"Tillie loveth you," said Gus. "Don't you, Tillie?"

"Yeth," lisped that maiden, for she, also, was affected with both lisp and sniff.

In all fairy-tales the hero scorns gold; virtue and poverty go hand in hand, and bribery and corruption belong only to ogres and such. My code of ethics was limited but clear.

"No," said I.

"Why not?" said "Buggins the Builder," cupidity gleaming from his eyes and sniffs distorting his nose.

"I don't love Tillie," said I, which was not the case at all, for, although I had never thought about it before, I now adored her, I felt sure.

"That doesn't matter," sniffed "Buggins the Builder."

"Yeth, it doeth," sniffed Tillie, and began to cry.

The conference broke up in disorder. Tillie joined the other children in the garden who looked at me askance. We were both regarded with strange and new interest for at least half a day, when a dead bird or a new toy threw our romance into the shadow. I, too, soon forgot my passion for Tillie in new adventures, for Uncle Hugh was at hand, and was a leader in many enterprises.

Whenever my father's acting season was over, we would be off to the seaside for the holiday. These halcyon days at Ramsgate are especially vivid still—Ramsgate, made immortal in the "Bab Ballads," and in the "Ingoldsby Legends," by the fearsome tale of "Smuggler Bill," who was raced over the cliff by the devil himself. There is the "Smuggler's Leap" to-day in front of the Granville Hotel, and from the hotel garden one goes down into the "Smuggler's Cave," which, with long, dark, tortuous passages, leads out onto the face of the cliff some fifty feet above the sea, where, on the rocks below, crashed "Smuggler Bill," and his dapple-gray mare in death grips with the devil on his coal-black steed.

Here on the very spot my father used to read to three delightfully terrified children the blood-curdling adventure of "Smuggler Bill." When he got to the verse

> "Smuggler Bill from his holster drew
> A large horse-pistol, of which he had two,
> Made by Knock. He drew back the cock
> As far as he could to the back of the lock;
> The trigger he pulled, the welkin it rang;
> The sound of the weapon it made such a *bang!*"

when he would reach the word "bang!" there was an awful effect, for he had begun the verse in a low, mys-

terious tone, very tense, and holding on to us as though to protect us from impending danger. He proceeded rapidly in this hushed, tense tone, until he reached the word "bang," which he would give out with such a shout that the cavern echoed again, and we, gloriously frightened, would be hurled from him by the force of the explosion, huddled together and wide-eyed, to approach again for the next verse and the next shock. These nerve-racking recitations especially appealed to my small brother Sam, who would frequently drag my father from his writing-desk, or even from his meals, saying: "'Ta' wants the 'Muggler's Leap.'"

When Joseph Jefferson visited England about this period to play "Rip Van Winkle" in London, he became a party to these occasions. Mr. Jefferson stayed at our house in Kensington. You who remember the sweet and gentle Jefferson will smile to know that my parent told his children that a famous pirate chief was coming to hide from the officers of the law. Shortly Jefferson arrived, wrapped up in a very large greatcoat and accompanied by his son Charles, who had met with an accident on shipboard. Charles was carried carefully into a room on the ground floor, and Jefferson and my father were closeted for a while making Charles comfortable in bed. When my father came out, I and my brothers were peering through the banisters at the door of the "pirate."

"Hush!" said my father. "There has been a terrible battle on the high seas. The pirate chief will be hanged if anybody speaks, and his first mate is full of cannonballs. There is only one thing to do, and that is to give up eating and to stand on one leg. Quick! There is no time to lose. Hush!" and he left us.

Shortly Mr. Jefferson came out of the room and found three little boys each standing on one leg on the staircase.

"Don't shoot!" said my elder brother.

"Bang!" shouted Mr. Jefferson, and the three small lads fled in dismay.

It did not take long for us to make friends with this "terror of the seas." We were soon taken to see "Rip," and then we played "Rip" ourselves, assisted by Joe Jefferson. In those days we played many plays. The rockery in our garden very readily became a weird spot in the Kaatskill Mountains, "Sleepy Hollow" and the "Village of Falling Water" materialized with the swift magic of childhood's thought, which can make one a gnome, or a giant, or a flea, or an elephant within the twinkling of an eye. "Rip" was a great play for us. The discarded Tillie was a fine Gretchen, and the performance of "Buggins the Builder" as Derrich very nearly doomed him to a theatrical career. My brother Sam was a gnome, and had to crawl about on all fours. He, however, was very mutinous, and no matter what character we cast him for he would insist on introducing the climactic speech from my father's performance of "Rosedale," where the hero cries: "Up, guards, and at 'em." Quite regardless of plot or play, Sam would cry this at inopportune moments, and when rebuked would mutter in his own secret language and conspire against our peace of mind.

"Wanted—a country house in Devonshire. Must have fishing from bedroom window." This advertisement, inserted by my father in the London daily papers, brought a prompt reply, and shortly "The Blesseds" found themselves in Devonshire under the precise conditions ad-

vertised for. Actually we could fish from the bedroom window, for a trout stream rushed by within twenty feet of the house. All his life, my father was a persistent fisherman; nothing could daunt him. The worst possible luck found him enthusiastic and victorious, for if he could not catch fish he would go into a shop and buy them, and so excite the envy and disgust of his equally unfortunate fellows.

Once, when we were fishing in the Rangeley Lakes, the sport was very bad indeed, and for an entire day but one trout was caught, and that by my father. He kept on pulling this same trout out of the water until the other sportsmen in distant boats concluded that his phenomenal success was owing to the spots he selected to fish in. They followed him about all over the lake. Wherever he threw his line, up came trout after trout amidst the greatest excitement and enthusiasm from him and his crew; but those who succeeded him could not get a bite. They awaited his return home, a gloomy group upon the shore. As he approached he lifted his lone fish up again and again, counting an apparently endless catch before their very eyes, when lo! the craft ran ashore, and there was but one trout.

A holiday with my father was no idle matter. We were all on the jump from morning until night. Things had to happen all the time. Once "The Blesseds" were taken to Margate. This time John T. Raymond was of the party. He himself was a restless spirit, and ever on the alert to seize fun by the forelock. My father and he disappeared from our scene of action one morning. Shortly, when we went on the sands for our daily adventures among the Punch and Judy shows and the donkey boys and the minstrel men, we were attracted

by a great crowd which surrounded some negro minstrels. Mr. Bones and the tambourine were especially active and diverting. We watched them for some time before we became aware that the acrobatic Mr. Bones was in reality John T. Raymond and the agile Mr. Tambourine, whose convulsions were quite amazing, was our adored father.

It transpired that my father had encountered an old comrade who had enlisted as a minstrel, and under his guidance he and Raymond had thus attired themselves, infusing unheard-of vitality into the performance and entirely eclipsing the efforts of rival performers.

Our delight knew no bounds and was the means of discovering my father's identity and precipitating his retreat in a cab—an open fly—which departed followed by a joyful crowd, Raymond and my father still playing bones and tambourine as they disappeared in the distance.

In later years, on my father's occasional engagements in London, Sunday was usually devoted to some kind of family outing. At one time he became manager of the Haymarket Theatre in conjunction with John S. Clarke. Clarke was a curious man, and would in the oddest way avoid meeting people by gliding into a near-by shop. My father delighted to see him do this, and then to stand outside the shop admiring the things in the window. After a while he would go in, pretending not to see Clarke, but would stand near him with his back to him. If Clarke tried to escape, my father would get into the doorway and, as it were, "bottle him up." I have seen him keep Clarke in a shop in the Haymarket for an hour, Clarke buying saws and chisels and garden hose and all sorts of things he did not want in order to

JOE JEFFERSON

JOHN T. RAYMOND

avoid recognition and to explain his presence to the shopkeeper. At last my father would turn and cry with great surprise: "Hello, Clarke! where did you come from?"

Clarke was a dear, kind fellow and sometimes on a Sunday would call to take my father and his children out for a drive. As he brought his own children with him, a regular caravan would leave No. 1 Vere Street, where my father lived at the time. Clarke and my father in one vehicle, two other traps contained his family; then came a hansom with my father's man and a couple of dogs, indispensable companions on all excursions; then myself and my brother and sister in another hansom; then my father's sister in a Victoria. Away we would go, these six or seven vehicles, down Oxford Street to Piccadilly and out into the country past Kensington, to dine somewhere by the river; a quaint and curious procession and a quaint and curious outing, full of unknown and eagerly expected possibilities; for wherever my father adventured the fortifications of convention and custom were likely to be stormed, to be taken by assault. One could never tell what the day might bring forth, or, as Don Quixote would say, what monstrous, strange, and incredible adventures might be ours, what giants of absurdity we might encounter, or what distressed damsels or enchanted knights errant we might not deliver from their conceits and delusions.

## XII

# UNCLE CHARLEY

My father had an odd but quite effective way of doing things. He once sent to an employment office and told the proprietor to send him the very best cook obtainable. A portly and quite overwhelming woman appeared. My father asked her if she could boil a potato. She was speechless. "Very well," said my father, "go and boil one, and cook me a mutton-chop." The portly person sailed away and shortly a perfect potato and a faultless mutton-chop appeared. "Good," said my father, "you are engaged." That cook was in our family for twenty years.

When I had reached the age of eight, it was decided that I must go to a boarding-school. My father used to hunt five days a week, taking a train from London at about five in the morning to Warwickshire, Leicestershire, or to Somersetshire, returning in the evening to play at the Haymarket Theatre. One day he went to a meet at Dunchurch, a little village three miles from Rugby in Warwickshire. He always had magnificent hunters, and when he would start on these occasions from our house in Kensington, my brothers and my sister and I would shout with glee from our nursery window. He in his red coat, two or three horses, and the groom would be off on their way to the railway-station. Well, on this day he went to Dunchurch, and during the run he found that he and one other well-mounted man were far ahead of the field. They began

to talk, and it developed that the other sportsman was a schoolmaster, one Alfred A. Harrison, who had just started a school for small boys at Dunchurch Lodge. "Good," said my father, as they took a fence together, "I'll send you my boy."

A few days later I was there, taking a tearful farewell of my mother, and a few days after that I was running after the hounds every half-holiday, taking short cuts across the country to the spinney where we knew the fox would be, or where experience had shown he would make for. I was for six years at that school, and when I left it I took my brother Sam up, and he was there six years, too. We are neither of us scholars, but we would not barter those dear years for much learning.

I never go to England but I go to Dunchurch. The school no longer exists. Some years since, on one of my visits, I viewed the charred remains of the old house. A large tree was growing in the middle of the room which used to be my dear old master's study. Another large tree grew in the room into which my mother had taken me at eight years of age to confront the spirit of learning; it grew from the middle of the floor, and its branches went out at the windows—the "Tree of Knowledge," I said to myself. I stood and looked at it for an hour, and I lived over again all the love and care and happiness I had known in that house, and I was quite sure that every leaf on that tree was a blessing from the heart of some little child who has found love and shelter under that fallen roof.

Then I went to the Duncow, the village inn, and I sat in the tap-room after a meal and said to a beer-bibber: "Oh, yes, I was at school here." "Where?" interposed the landlord. "Over there, at Dunchurch Lodge."

"That was never a school," said he. "Oh, yes it was," said I, "and I was there for six years." He smiled on me with pity in his eye. "Well, I have lived here thirty years," said he, "and I never heard of no school there." Two negatives make an affirmative. "Aha!" said I, "it was forty-five years ago that I was a schoolboy." You see, I came near being the oldest inhabitant.

There is a pair of stocks outside the Duncow. In ancient times the passing malefactor was made to sit on a bench, and his ankles were placed in two holes in a thick plank which faced him, and his wrists in two other holes, and there he sat padlocked, and perhaps repentant. I have seen a man in those stocks, the one bad man who had passed that way in half a century. So I looked at the stocks, and I looked at the church tower whence I had heard the moping owl to the moon complain, and I looked at the cottage which legend declares was the rendezvous of Guy Fawkes and his fellow conspirators, and I looked at the "Tuck Shop" across the street, and I felt very lonely.

This same Tuck Shop! I had an uncle who lived in Coventry hard by, a dear fellow but with a Mephistophelian humor. He used to drive over to Dunchurch in a mail phaeton with two of the largest horses I ever saw, with much clanking of chains and much frothing of mouths, and he would take me to this Tuck Shop. "Go and get your chum," he would say. Hotfoot I would fetch him (one Freeling, where is he now?). Panting, we would greet him—Uncle Charley. "Now, then," he would say with a steely gleam in his eye, "pitch in." When we had eaten incredibly, and paused to breathe, "Do you feel sick yet?" would exclaim Uncle Charley. "No," we would reply. "Well, try some of those!" pointing to a deadly looking bottle of bullet-like sweets. "Ah,

The cross The tuck shop

Duncow Inn The stocks The jail

DUNCHURCH, NEAR RUGBY

do you feel sick, yet?" "No." "Don't *you* feel sick?" to my dear Freeling. "Not yet!" "Give them some of those things on the shelf there," answered Uncle Charley. "Now" (after some watchful waiting), "now you feel sick, don't you?" "No, sir," we would grin. "Well, I'll be hanged," would declare the avuncular one. "Here! Here's half a sovereign each for you. I'm off." Dash! would go the horses. Clang! would go the chains. Slash! would go the whip, and away went Uncle Charley! Sick! We! He knew us not. Patent insides had we. A-1, copper-lined, indestructible, such appetites for everything but learning!

We did absorb many bits of information, for we were surrounded by a general persistent endeavor. Such dear, kind fellows were our four masters! And our *drawing*-master! When I went to take my brother Sam to this school, the drawing-class was in session. I had just gone on the stage. At thirteen years the master had had some hopes of me as a painter. "Hello," said he, "how is the art?" "Oh, I have given it up," said I, "I have taken to acting." "Traitor," said he, slowly and sadly, and he turned away. He was a poor, very poor man of about fifty. He walked three miles to Dunchurch and three miles back to Rugby twice a week to give little boys lessons in drawing. He wore a slouch-hat and a cropped beard, and he sang all the time. I can't walk far without being tired, and I never sing at all. Well, he gave me a prize for drawing—"Self-Help," by Smiles, a book that I read with delight; it has helped me a good deal.

Mr. Harrison said to us: "What you *know* is much. What you *are* is *more*."

Whenever we told tales of each other, whenever we did any small thing that was punishable, Mr. Harrison

would say: "Do you think a little gentleman would do that?" We did not think so, and we felt it, and we said nothing, but thought much.

Since they have reached manhood, I have met many of the boys in that school. I have never met one who was not a man of character, and I have met some who were men of distinction. Soldiers, lawyers, doctors, all professions. They ran after hounds, candy wouldn't make them sick. But while they ran and while they ate, they had in their eager little hearts examples of sweet and kind nobility, daily and hourly before them in the persons of this dear master and his wife and aids, that have moulded many of them in the years that have since come. "Would a little gentleman do that?" might be nailed up to the extinction even of "God Bless Our Home."

I don't think I gleaned much learning at that school, and these precepts so readily applauded are hard to maintain. But it is not my remembrance of Colenso, nor of Euclid, nor of Cæsar's Commentaries, nor my adoration of the multiplication table, that takes me back to Dunchurch each succeeding year; nor is it the Tuck Shop, for my taste for sugar is not what it was. But be it what it may, it is something that I must satisfy, or want.

My brother Sam was more of a scholar than I, sorely against his will, as this letter, saved from the scant correspondence of his anxious childhood, will testify.

My Dear Ma:

I ham so hunape. Please send me twelve stamps. Has the black cack killed any more piggins. Do kill it.

I yours lovin son Sam.

P. S. I am still learning *Greek*.

Now, this is an ideal document. Sam's ignorance of English and his hatred of the classics make up the moral of this story. As I look back on it, I say: "Sam is *Sam*. Greek is only *Greek*." Sam has ever been aware of this fact. It is only dawning on me at this late hour.

Sam's philosophy and strange wisdom are instanced by another story. An adorable master named Walker was expounding the fifth proposition of Euclid to Sam's class of six boys, whose toes did not touch the floor. Walker reduced the proposition to an absurdity, Sam steadily star-gazing, and then with blackboard and chalk laboriously proved its sanity. Suddenly pointing a long finger at Sam's open mouth, he cried: "Go on, Sam." Sam looked addled for a moment, and then murmured: "Which is absurd." "Write it out ten times," said Walker.

We had our own separate gardens at this school. We delved and we garnered, and we were allowed to have our produce cooked and served. Whenever the hounds were in the village, a boy, usually the head boy (almost ten or eleven years old), would say after breakfast, "Half-holiday! Three cheers for Mr. Harrison!" We knew Mr. Harrison was eager for the fray. "You owls!" he would say. ("Owls" he ever called us, the bird of wisdom, observe, Minerva's chicken.) "You owls! go on, away with you." And away it was. Such red blood dashing through such young hearts, such cries, such flying over hedges, such friendships, such vows, such memories!

Was not my father wise to know that to cook a potato superbly was to be a good cook, and that a schoolmaster who could ride gamely to hounds, must be a good school-

master? May not a potato be as good as a feast, and may not he who runs gayly read wisely?

Greek! I learned none. Latin, less. Often have I bewailed this loss. But there has been something else, of no value—of all value. Not a penny in it. Hard to explain. But it takes me back to Dunchurch every year, and will do so till I die.

## XIII

# A "DAWDLER"

"He's a 'dawdler'!" said Mr. Snelling, really in a tone of denunciation, and exhibiting, in the agitation of his dear old face and his patriarchal yellow-white beard, distinct signs of storm and stress. "He is a 'dawdler'! He absolutely refuses to learn! He is a 'dawdler'!"

"What *is* a 'dawdler'?" inquired "Ta" of Rebecca, much crestfallen and depressed by an accusation which, although indefinite, seemed somehow to be surely degrading if not felonious.

"*You* know well enough!" said Rebecca, thus veiling her own ignorance. "A 'dawdler' is a person who dawdles. I am ashamed of you."

With much misgiving and great labor "Ta" fingered the dictionary and spelled out this definition: "To waste time in trifling employment."

"As what, for instance?" thought "Ta." "Dreaming perhaps? or singing? or wondering about things generally?"

"A dawdler! *is* he?" said "Ta's" father. "We'll see about that! What is seven times nine?" said he to "Ta," very suddenly, on entering the nursery.

"Ta" solved this conundrum with alacrity. It was one of the wearisome things he had laboriously acquired.

"What year did King Stephen come to the throne?" "Ta" demanded of his father, aglow with conscious wisdom, and resolved to "undawdle" himself here and now.

"I'm hanged if I know," admitted "Ta's" father, regarding his son with undisguised admiration.

"Stephen to seize the throne did contrive in eleven hundred and thirty-five!" repeated "Ta" sturdily, and preparing for a further outflow of knowledge.

"The boy's a marvel!" cried "Ta's" father.

"Dublin is the capital of Ireland," continued "Ta" volubly, somewhat flushed with triumph and with acquittal well in sight. "It stands on the river Liffey. The population of the city is 249,602. It sends two members to Parliament. The chief manufacture is poplin, which is much celebrated. The main branches of industry——"

"That will do," said "Ta's" father, and he embraced "Ta" tenderly, and made anxious inquiries about his health and his appetite. "Ta" heard him, later, declare to "Ta's" mother that they must be very careful or he would have cerebral fever or water on the brain, or perhaps even lose his reason. "The boy's a prodigy!" said "Ta's" father. "He knows more useless things than any lad I ever heard of." As he kissed "Ta" good night that evening he mentioned that he was off, on the morrow, to play in Liverpool.

"Oh, yes!" said "Ta." "Liverpool is the capital of Lancashire. The population is——"

But "Ta's" father interrupted by hugging him furiously and declaring that he was being overworked.

Next morning "Ta's" father plunged into a sort of whirlwind of hansom cabs, and trunks, and farewells, and directions that all the children should have their feet in mustard and water. There was much also about linseed tea, and Epsom salts, and Gregory's powders, and vows to write frequently and declarations of what we

all wanted at Christmas, "Ta's" sister especially insisting that nothing would satisfy her but a certain lion from the "Lowther Arcade."

Said "Ta" at this: "The lion is the most majestic and ferocious of carnivorous quadrupeds, chiefly an inhabitant of Africa although it is found also——"

But here "Ta's" father drove away sorely perplexed concerning "Ta's" sanity, and calling out that certain precautions should be taken in regard to sleep and diet.

The truth was that, although "Ta" was actually well acquainted with the facts which had been divulged in the course of his ordeals at the Snelling Academy, it had never occurred to him to use this miscellaneous knowledge in daily conversation. It would seem, however, that one's reputation for learning depended greatly on imparting information in and out of season, and on making even one's bread and butter a source of intelligence and commentary. It was evident that to be a "dawdler" was discreditable; that to possess knowledge and never mention it would be apt to brand one as a person who "wasted time in trifling employment," such as gazing at the sky, or wool-gathering, or minding one's own business.

When Pointer brought the pony round in the morning, "Ta" startled him by saying, apropos of nothing at all: "Four times eight is thirty-two!"

"Beg pardon, sir!" said Pointer.

"I said," replied "Ta," "that the battle of Crécy was fought in 1346."

"Oh!" said Pointer.

"And," continued "Ta," "that the distance from the earth to the moon is 237,600 miles."

Pointer was so deeply impressed by these abstruse

statements that he was overwhelmed by a settled gloom during the ride in the park. On the return home Rebecca was encountered in the hall bearing a flower-pot containing lilies.

"How did you enjoy your ride?" asked Rebecca.

"The white lily," replied "Ta," "is a native of the Levant. It has long been cultivated in gardens and much sung by poets."

"What's that?" said Rebecca.

"I assure you," said "Ta," "that three plus eight plus four is fifteen."

"Good gracious!" cried Rebecca.

"Isn't he a wonder!" whispered Pointer.

"I should say a genius!" said Rebecca.

"Ta's" fame spread rapidly. Fanny Marsh, the cook, looked fairly stunned when "Ta" assured her that a cabbage was "a plant in general cultivation for culinary purposes," and that "the cod was a fish almost rivalling the herring in its importance to mankind."

"Such cleverness is not natural," said she. "I've been a cook for thirty years and I know what I'm talking about."

The circle thus impressed by "Ta's" erudition was, of course, small. Excellence is comparative, and there were people who were by no means astonished at his information, although eyebrows were raised at his unusual manner of imparting it, for it was startling for staid ladies, when asking after "Ta's" health, to receive the reply that "Watt Tyler's rebellion occurred in 1381, during the reign of King Richard II."

"Ta's" desire to eliminate the stain of "dawdler" from his record seemed practically realized. Mr. and Mrs. Snelling maintained their opinion; but "Ta's" father and

mother, Pointer, Sarah, Rebecca, and the gardener were convinced that "Ta" was greatly misjudged, and was indeed a scholar of no mean parts. The impression gained ground among "Ta's" adherents that Mr. and Mrs. Snelling were jealous of his attainments, and that he made them look small before the intellectual world. Sarah ("Kluklums") indeed was heard to declare that if "Ta" was a "dawdler" she would "die on the road."

"The child has a perfect passion for learning," wrote "Ta's" aunt to his mother. "I am terrified for fear he will become a schoolmaster, or perhaps go into politics. I think he should cultivate athletics, and should eliminate the study of the classics from his curriculum."

"Ta" overheard his aunt offer this opinion to Rebecca, and concluded that his "curriculum" was his head. On bumping that member against a table, therefore, he announced that he had a pain in his "curriculum."

It was at this time that "Ta" went to school at Dunchurch, and was distressed to find that part of his torture was to be the continued study of Greek and Latin; hence that historic letter in which he announced that he was "hunape" and wailed in his misery: "I am still learning Greek."

Most children would have escaped distasteful study by an assumption of stupidity. "Ta's" discovery that a little knowledge was not only a dangerous but a terrifying thing had many elements of novelty and exhibited that penetration into human motives heretofore remarked upon.

"One often hears that people die from overstudy," said "Ta's" mother.

"Frequently they go mad," said "Ta's" father.

"Knowledge is power," declared "Ta's" mentor, and

proceeded to illustrate that statement by writing on the blackboard, "Balbus is building a wall." How the possession of that fact, even in Latin, could add to his dominion, present or future, "Ta" was unable to perceive.

To most children the pursuit of learning does not partake of the pleasures of the chase. The sport is not made either beautiful or fascinating, nor is the object to be attained so explained and illuminated as to create desire. The process assumes the sombre hue of a task; indeed, it is mostly so designated, and the little mind so eager to know and so full of wonder and strange questionings is dulled and tortured by restraint, and the wearisome accumulation of means to an end not seen. Had "Ta" been told by some eloquent and kindly tongue of all "the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome," his imagination, thus fed, might have craved a knowledge of the former as a favor for being a good boy, and have felt some enthusiasm concerning the inexplicable mania of Balbus for the construction of walls. As it was, the mere thought of those defunct languages gave him a pain in his "curriculum," and the derangement of Balbus, which resulted in mural construction infinite and apparently purposeless, excited extreme disgust and positive aversion.

The result was that "Ta," having established at home a dread that overwork would deprive him of reason, was not permitted to wrestle with the classics, but in order to preserve his sanity he was taught to ride to hounds, and very learnedly hunted three or four times a week.

"Ta's" own private language, which had once been the secret means of communication between himself and "Kluklums," had of late been discarded, greatly to the

loss of the science of philology. But "Kluklums's" soul, quick to note any inclination in the tactics of her adored "Prince," humbly sought to interpret his statements, geographical, mathematical, historical, and botanical, and thereby landed herself in what, to another, would have been rather embarrassing dilemmas.

She perceived in these scraps of lore a code or cipher such as is reputed to prevail in the "agony column" of the newspapers for the convenience of lovers and burglars, and she cudgelled her brains to translate them into deeds responsive. When, for instance, "Ta" would remark, in reply to a request for the time of day, that "Snowden was 3,571 feet high," "Kluklums" would add to people's amazement by declaring, "Yes, and I have some in my pocket," thereupon producing clean handkerchiefs.

She was fearfully in earnest about it and was heard to vow she would "die on the road," but she would know what Master "Ta" meant by his new manner of speech.

"Ta," meanwhile, never appeared in the least surprised at her interpretations of his statements and accepted whatever translation she offered as though it were the one expected.

"Ipswich, the capital of Suffolk, is situated on the river Orwell," would say "Ta"; "the population is 50,762."

"I told her so," would answer "Kluklums," "and she said she would be home to tea at five o'clock."

It is a curious thing that "Ta's" campaign, undertaken with the purpose of controverting the assertion that he was a "dawdler" and continued as a means of escape from a study of Greek and Latin, ended by making him a regular dictionary of universal information, which he continues to be to this day. In times of national stress and uncertainty people say: "Ask 'Ta'! What does 'Ta'

say?" in moments of private need or doubt, "'Ta' will know," or "'Ta' will tell us what to do" has become a commonplace. The force of habit is illustrated by the fact that when recently in New York "Ta" was, in company with several other persons, the occupant of an elevator which fell some ten stories to the basement of a tall building. He extricated himself without haste from the distracted and agitated crowd and remarked, as though continuing a train of thought: "Yes, and for the Saint Leger, I would advise you to lay 12 to 4 on Beeswax. If past performances count for anything he's bound to win."

Those who know him not thought this was a pose on "Ta's" part, but "Kluklums" and I are aware that: "If you bring up a child in the way he should go, he will seldom depart therefrom."

# PART II

## HUGH

# XIV

# HUGH

If you have read "Tristram Shandy," you will remember Uncle Toby's defense of the redoubt built by Corporal Trim, and how the ancient warrior puffed pipe after pipe of tobacco smoke from his stronghold to represent the firing of cannon to the annihilation of an imaginary foe, and perhaps you thought such conduct quite childish on the part of a soldier and a gentleman. Such a conclusion depends entirely upon the point of view. One may be as a little child and not at all ridiculous or unreasonable to some people. I happen to have known a little child who had just such a relative as my Uncle Toby, and this little child thought, and still thinks, that his uncle—Uncle Hugh was his name—was by far the noblest and sanest person he ever met, although most grown-up people were quite sure he was as mad as a hatter, erratic as a March hare.

These are some of the things that made them think so: Uncle Hugh distrusted all grown-up people. He did not like them. He adored little children, and was a child again when he was with them. Although he was a poor man, he kept an old asthmatic dog for many years in luxury in a loose box in London. In another loose box he kept an old horse, a victim of all the ills horseflesh is heir to. I used to go with him to see these fortunate animals, but he would never take grown-up people to visit them.

Uncle Hugh and I were walking opposite the Knightsbridge barracks one day when a cavalry regiment which had seen service in one of England's "little wars" came in sight. They had come home. Some were wounded and wore bandages. Many a horseman led a riderless horse, and on each side of the saddle of many such a riderless horse, with foot in stirrup, had been secured the tall guardsman's boots of the dead soldier, while some garments of the absent rider were attached to the pommel.

"That is the way my horse came home," said Uncle Hugh.

I was well aware that Uncle Hugh loved this horse which he never rode. For fifteen years he had kept him—a big chestnut with white stockings—in a stable near Saint James Street. It seemed a strange thing for a poor man to do; you can't keep a horse in London for nothing, it must cost about three pounds a week; that is one hundred and fifty pounds a year. When a man has an income of only five hundred a year, this is a serious item.

"How did your horse come home, Uncle Hugh?" said I.

It appeared that Hugh once had a very dear friend, a soldier, an officer in a cavalry regiment. In a certain engagement, during a "little war," this friend had been fatally wounded and had fallen from his horse. After the charge, which had resulted so seriously, the horse of the officer, running wild over the field, had found his master, and had stood over him, neighing and, as it were, calling, calling for help. Those searching for the wounded were attracted to the spot. The injured man was picked up and taken to a field-hospital. He lingered for an hour

and then died. On a piece of paper he had scrawled these words: "Hugh, I am dying. Take care of my horse." The letter had been taken from his tunic, it was stained with blood.

Hugh was at home on the steeds of Father Neptune, but an English hunter, turned charger, was of no use to him. Still, there was the message from his dead comrade; there was the letter with its injunction stamped in blood.

Hugh, when I first recall him, arrived at my father's house in his naval uniform. He wore the long side-whiskers of the day—1865. His sea chest was full of treasures which he soon disclosed to me. He gave me at once a nautical telescope with the flags of all nations on the outside of it, a mariner's compass, a small piece of the lately laid Atlantic cable, "Peter Parley's Tales," and the "Ingoldsby Legends." He showed me his sword, and I soon became his constant companion. As usual, the grown-ups found him a bit odd. But I was able to entertain him. There was a rockery in the garden and a kind of cave in it. There it was my habit to be shipwrecked constantly, sometimes with imaginary followers, sometimes with any companions accident might provide. The surrounding lawn easily became the boundless ocean, with no friendly sail in sight from day to day, and a fountain, which imagination could readily obliterate, could, when circumstances demanded, become the long-looked-for ship of rescue. This I soon explained to Uncle Hugh, who saw nothing unusual in these arrangements. On the contrary, he suggested many splendid "improvements." We went through untold agonies from starvation in the cave, and boarded the fountain (having approached it under fire), seized the crew (my

young sister), made them walk the plank, and occasionally hanged them to the yard-arm. One great day, Hugh arranged that when he should call for me at the small school I attended, we should enlist some of the other children, and that a fierce attack should be made on the cave. I and my party were not to know whence to expect the danger. I lay in the cave with the large nautical telescope scanning the horizon when, to my great excitement, I saw Hugh climb over the garden wall from the street, sword in hand. I at once manned the long-boat (a box in which croquet mallets were kept) and started to meet and destroy the foe, when, to my terror, a policeman appeared on the wall beside my adored uncle, seized him by the neck, and the two disappeared into the street. I and my reckless crew paled with fear. The law had us in its "clutch." Hugh would surely be hanged in the Tower of London, or perhaps burned at the stake. Wails of anguish arose from the long-boat, as, careless of the hungry ocean, we jumped from it on to the lawn. At this awful moment, however, Hugh appeared safe and sound at the garden door.

"Where is the policeman?" I cried.

"Dead!" said Hugh, "and since we have had no food for ten days, we will eat him."

During a dinner at the house of Hugh's sister one day a man at the table asked the hostess how she happened to have on the wall the picture of one Commissioner Yeh, the leader of the Chinese rebellion of 1858, who had distinguished himself by beheading 100,000 of his opponents, and he proceeded to recount the daring exploit of a young naval officer who, during the siege of Canton, accompanied a small band of about 100 men, led by Captain Key of her Majesty's ship *Sans Pareil.*

With most reckless daring these few made their way into the very centre of the hostile city. They found the hiding-place of the head and front and instigator of the rebellion, Commissioner Yeh. They entered his abode. Captain Key arrested him, and the coxswain of the party (Hugh), seizing the Chinaman's pigtail wrapped it several times around his wrist, thus rendering him powerless. The rebel, who was a huge, fat man, was then conducted through the city of Canton and on to the man-of-war. The Chinese were so amazed that not a shot was fired until the sailors were well out in the stream. This capture practically put an end to the rebellion.

My aunt pointed to the fair-haired, blue-eyed, childish-looking Hugh, who by this time was covered with confusion. "It was Hugh," said my aunt.

"What was Hugh?" asked the narrator.

"Hugh captured Commissioner Yeh."

Everybody laughed as at a good joke. She might as well have declared that I, a little boy, had done the daring deed. Hugh turned her talk away from the danger-point by some quite childish and irrelevant nonsense, and no more was said. No one believed it. But it was the fact. Quixotic Hugh, the companion of children, the lover of his old horse and his superannuated dog, had done this thing.

Uncle Hugh lived alone without a servant in one small room at the top of a house in Waterloo Place. Occasionally he would move to Richmond for a few weeks, to the Richmond Club, and to a few chosen friends (children) he would exhibit a certain dog-kennel he had invented which, by means of intricate tackle, could be pulled up into a tree so that the dog might be placed in

it at night and hauled up out of the way of dangerous reptiles and wild beasts. He kept, at a coachmaker's in London, a dog-cart of his invention. When your horse should run away, you had only to pull a lever, and the shafts separated from the cart, which would come to a standstill while the horse would continue his wild career with the shafts attached to him. I think, however, there was a line fastened to the harness with which the horse could be thrown.

All the furniture and ornaments and other necessary belongings in Uncle Hugh's room at the top of the house could be seized with the greatest suddenness, and in the most unexpected manner could be gathered into packages and chests, and prepared, in a wink, for any kind of an expedition to any place on the planet. I saw it done. There was a dado which looked like oak, it was really tin; all the chairs and tables and chests, the bedstead, everything, were either receptacles or could be collapsed rapidly. Like a conjurer, Uncle Hugh would attack these things, and literally in five minutes every article would be packed in its exact place, ready to start anywhere.

People (grown-up people) used to think this was the mania of a mad person. Uncle Hugh always seemed to have an idea that he would be called upon one day to undertake an expedition which would necessitate this astonishing activity and despatch in packing up. To me, as a child, it was the most natural and reasonable way to pack things. Why take days and days over it, if it could be done in a moment?

Uncle Hugh was a sailor, a naval officer of distinction. At about forty years of age he had retired with the rank of captain. His room was decked with trophies of the

| NAME. | Date of Birth. | Cadet at Entry. | Sub-Lieut. | Lieut. | Commdr. | Captain. | Medals. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| HUGH ROBERT NEWBURGH-STEWART. | June 1, 1831. | March 27, 1846. | April 15, 1852. | Feb. 3, 1855. | March 1, 1865. | March 1, 1880. | Baltic. Crimean. Turkish. Canton, with Clasp. |

Appointed Cadet to H.M.S. *Belleisle*, 74 guns, Captain Kingcome, which was employed as troop ship from APRIL 17, 1846, to SEPTEMBER 7, 1848, on N. American, W. Indian, Mediterranean, and Home Stations: afterwards joining H.M.S, *Prince Regent*, 90 guns, Captain W. F. Martin, and serving in Mediterranean Squadron under Admiral Sir W Parker, also during Commodore Martin's command of the Frigate Squadron on the Lisbon Station.

MARCH 26, 1850, joined H.M.S. *Lily*, 12 gun brig, at Lisbon, Commander Bedford, serving in her on W. Coast of Africa for suppression of slave trade; also on E. Indian and China Stations, from SEPTEMBER 26, 1850, to NOVEMBER 18, 1854, being frequently engaged with pirates, at that time very numerous on the coast of China.

APRIL 7, 1852, landed at Shanghai in charge of small arm men for the protection of British subjects during the Taeping rebellion.

MAY 4, 1852, landed with small arm men on the Island of Patchugaan to rescue the crew of an American Merchant ship who had been made prisoners by pirates.

AUGUST 11, 1853, while off the coast of Tymong, serving in H.M.S. *Lily*, engaged, under sail, seven piratical junks (out of a fleet of 70), and after six hours' engagement, the ship having been raked twice by the fire of the junks, the pirates were dispersed and the junks sunk.

(For this service was on NOVEMBER 23, 1853, appointed Acting Lieutenant to H.M.S. *Rattler* (corvette), under Commander Mellish, for special service in Canton River.

FACSIMILE OF PART OF THE OFFICIAL RECORD OF UNCLE HUGH

sea—sharks' teeth, harpoons, cannon, many kinds of firearms, charts, telescopes, nautical instruments, a sword over the mantelpiece, pistols, all the things that children adore. When Hugh would favor us with an exhibition of his dexterity in preparing for "the expedition," he would say: "Now, then, get ready!" He would lock the door, so as to shut out intruders, and with much seriousness he would begin: "You see I am prepared to go anywhere at a moment's notice, at the Queen's command. Now, we imagine that a messenger is approaching with my commission. He is at the door below. He is coming up the stairs, two steps at a time (we were on the edge of our chairs by this time, and could assuredly hear the steps on the stone stairs without). He knocks at the door. He enters. I take the blue envelope and open it. 'On Her Majesty's service!' I read my instructions. I don't lose a moment. I say 'Go!'" And with a bound Uncle Hugh would seize the tin dado, rush around the room, as he detached it from the wall, fold it up in sections, throw it into one chest; the tables, the chairs folded into each other, lamps, rugs, books, instruments, firearms, coal-scuttles, clothes, boots, decanters, silver, a travelling cook-stove, everything a man needs to go anywhere. In three minutes all had disappeared, and Uncle Hugh, panting, triumphant, stood amid his sea chests, overcoat on, hat on, sticks and umbrella in hand, "Ready! at the Queen's command," would say Uncle Hugh. Grown-up people who heard us talk about this experience laughed, naturally enough, and declared that Uncle Hugh was "gone there," tapping their grown-up foreheads. This used to annoy me when I was a child, because I was quite sure Hugh would one day do this thing he had on his mind, and which he had thus confided

to me and my small brother, so we concluded we would not discuss him with the grown-up ones for the future. We believed in Hugh, and we waited in confidence.

One day people knocked at Uncle Hugh's door and were told that he had gone.

"Where?" said these callers.

"To rescue Chinese Gordon," said the man at the door.

These people smiled and went their way. But it was a fact. Not just yet "at the Queen's command," but at the promptings of even a higher authority, Uncle Hugh had taken his instructions.[1]

It was in 1885 that Gordon was in such danger at Khartoum. Hugh gathered together his small resources, he fitted out an expedition all by himself. He started to rescue Gordon. He proceeded across the desert. His force of natives turned on him, the only white man. They plotted to kill him. It was his habit to sleep each night with dogs tied to his wrists, and a weapon in either hand. One night he heard his dogs growl. He awoke, and quite near him some men discussed the plan of murdering him and stealing his outfit and supplies. They put the plan into execution the next day. Hugh shot the leaders at once, and marched the others back to his starting-point, day after day, without sleeping, keeping them before him at a safe distance. His solitary expedition failed, as all grown-up people knew it would. But somewhere it has been hailed as a success of a kind.

Gordon was killed at Khartoum, as all the world knows. Help arrived too late. Hugh suffered without complaint the pangs of poverty for years after this adventure. No

[1] Uncle Hugh Stewart must not be confounded with Sir Herbert Stewart who led the actual relief expedition. Nor with Sir Donald Stewart who accompanied General Gordon and who also lost his life when despatched down the river for assistance. These, however, were relatives of Hugh.

one knew of his straits. He kept it from grown-up people, and my brother and I and other small confidants were leaving our childhood behind us in distant lands. We never knew.

One day a doctor called on my brother in London and told him Uncle Hugh was ill. My brother went to his lodging. People at the door were pale and frightened. More doctors who were gathered there said that the room was barricaded, that Hugh was violent, that it was dangerous for any one to enter. My brother called through the door. Hugh knew his voice and opened. His appearance was quite wild and gaunt, untidy, distraught.

"I thought you were a grown-up person," said Hugh. Then he talked in his ancient, childish way sanely enough.

My brother got rid of the disturbed neighbors, and for some days looked after Uncle Hugh. One day when he knocked at the door there was no reply. He went in. Hugh was lying in a hammock slung across the room—this was his present fancy in bedsteads. He was half dressed. He was talking to himself. He had a large navy revolver in each hand, his other weapons, guns and swords, were about him.

"How are you, Uncle Hugh?" said my brother.

Hugh, looking steadily at him, said, "At the Queen's command," and died.

He had been called—whither? Who shall say if this was the expedition he had vaguely expected? Who shall say if the messenger whose coming we had so often seen enacted was not the angel visitor who had now knocked at the door? The hands, accustomed to weapons, had sought them instinctively at the approach of danger. But for this final adventure, dear Hugh, you were armed

as few of us shall be. No foe can harm you, all others will salute and say: "Pass on."

This is not fiction. Uncle Hugh was a veritable Don Quixote. A child at heart, gentle, brave, true, kind, generous, simple, romantic, fanatical perhaps. Don Quixote I always think him. Long, thin, with large aquiline nose, very fair hair, blue eyes, a trace of Irish brogue in his voice; always laughing when with little children. He was a bachelor, but I am sure that somewhere there must have been a Dulcinea for that chivalrous heart. Perhaps "at the Queen's command" had a double meaning to him.

In the Elysian fields Uncle Hugh, I know, wanders with his asthmatic dog and his dilapidated horse; is greeted by the ancient heroes as an equal, and comforts small boys who may be frightened as they step from the boat that conveys them across the Styx. I am sure he plays at being a pirate, and perhaps he induces Achilles and other warriors to take a part. Dear Uncle Hugh, I salute you, "in the Queen's name!"

## XV

# FORWARD!

If you had been reading "Captains Courageous," or "Allan Quatermain," or "Treasure Island," and should shortly come across an old sea-dog's old sea chest—brass-handled, brass-cornered, brass-plated, redolent of winds and whales, and filling your mind's eye with belaying-pins and pinnaces and "sons-of-sea-cooks," and "main-sheets," and "abaft here" and "ahoy! there," and much more mellifluous maritime lingo, what would you say to yourself before you proceeded to open it? You would say, as you pondered with the heavy key between your fingers: "This chest harbors the dreams of my childhood. If it is empty, well I can still dream. But what if it contains strange documents of dreams come true; a map telling me how and where I shall find the buried treasure; the love-letters of the princess who dies for me of unrequited love; the fruitless appeal of the nobles and the grateful populace to make me King of the kingdom of 'Neverwas'? Such thoughts would indeed give you pause. But then if, on turning the key and opening the chest and scanning logbooks and papers, you should be confronted with the faded photograph of Uncle Hugh, holding a huge, death-dealing pistol in one hand and a most damnable dirk in the other, dressed in a kilt and with this exciting inscription on the back: 'Abyssinia, 300 miles up country, waiting for a friendly visit from an Arab chief,' and dated 1885. How then?"

With the mariner's habit of making records, uncle

Hugh had paused in his expedition toward Khartoum to take this picture. Here is his logbook where is inscribed:

May 4, 1852. Latitude 25-58 North; longitude 120-3 East. Patchugsan, White Dog Island. Landed with crew of *Contest* and *Lily* to rescue the crew of an American merchant ship taken by Chinese pirates.

May 11th. Had charge of *Lily's* pinnace at capture of 70 piratical Chinese junks, *Tymong*.

Here we are surely in the thick of adventures—shipwrecked mariners and pigtailed pirates. We are dull-witted, indeed, if we do not see ourselves led by all-conquering Uncle Hugh rescuing starving American sailors on the desert island at the very moment when they are drawing lots to determine who shall be devoured. And do not these same rescued sailors then wreak poetic justice on the Chinese marauders by taking part in the blood-curdling conflict with the seventy piratical junks? Is not Uncle Hugh here, there, and everywhere, his fair hair floating in the wind, battling from junk to junk while the almond-eyed salt-water thieves are hurled into the sea delightfully mangled, dismembered, and decapitated?

Here is a volume, entitled "Scenes and Studies of Savage Life," by G. M. Sproat—London, Smith and Elder, 1868. On the fly-leaf in Uncle Hugh's hand is this startling statement:

I lived with the Haidar Indians for nearly two years, dressed and painted in same manner as that tribe.

See page 186—a fight I had with the "Ahouahts."

It is a curious fact that the Indian war-whoop, "Weena! Weena!" means "Forward!"—same as my family motto.

The book depicts the life and records the history of one of the most savage tribes of North America, the inhabitants of the Queen Charlotte Islands. Their legends declare that their forefathers came ages ago in great canoes from the West, and sure enough there is a tribe of Hindoos named "Haidar" in India to-day. Hence "Haidarabad," from "Haidar," lion, and "Bad," town.

Having read the book, you take a long breath, and wonder what on earth Hugh was doing for two years, "dressed and painted in the same manner as that tribe," and you behold him clothed in sea-otter skins and draped with a strangely patterned blanket made from the wool of the mountain-goat, woven upon a warp of shred cedar bark, his face daubed with fat and painted with pigments of vermilion, blue, and black, bracelets of silver on his arms, and copper rings upon his ankles and about his neck; a head-dress consisting of a strange wooden mask, ornamented with mother-of-pearl, stands up from his forehead, with a piece fitting over the head, attached to which are huge feathers, and supporting a long strip of cloth about two feet wide which hangs down to the feet and is covered with skins of the ermine. He wears, too, ornaments of dentalium and haliotis shells, and of the orange-colored bill of the puffin.

At the time of Hugh's residence among them these people were cannibals and head-hunters, and the historian cheerfully remarks: "Your head may be cut off at any moment. They think no more of cutting off a man's head than of killing a salmon. They are subject to fits of demoniacal possession." And he describes an occasion when "It was a clear moonlight night. The men danced on the beach, many holding high in one hand a musket, in the other several human heads."

UNCLE HUGH IN ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT

From a photograph taken in Alexandria, as shown in the reproduction at top

They indulged in human sacrifice, and, to form hardened and fierce hearts their children were taught to stick their knives into the victim without showing any sign of pity or horror. At certain religious ceremonies flesh was bitten from the naked arm and old people torn limb from limb and eaten alive.

They worshipped the moon. The killer whale was their evil spirit, and what with sorcerers and medicine-men, and witch-doctors, and a fine supply of devils there was no lack of excitement.

What in the world was Uncle Hugh doing for two years, "dressed and painted in the same manner as that tribe"? There it is in his own handwriting.

Please do not tell me that having attired himself according to the description in the book he sat on a rock for these two years and twiddled his thumbs, or that he spent the time in fishing, or that he donned vermilion pigments and feathered head-dress that he might admire himself Narcissus-like in the stream. Be it observed that the war-cry of the Haidars was "Weena! Weena!" "Forward!"—the same as Hugh's family motto.

The Irish language was originally Sanscrit. There are many ancient Irish customs which resemble those of the Hindoos. These Haidars probably were from India. Did Uncle Hugh's romantic vein imagine some tie of blood between himself and this savage clan? Did he proclaim himself "King of the Cannibal Islands"? Did he, as Don Quixote, his prototype, present himself with an island or two and acclaim himself Monarch of the Kingdom of Micomicon?

"The man who would be king" encountered strange happenings. Did not a certain Johnson arise one fine

morning and say to his wife: "Well, I am going to be a king"?

"Where?" said the astonished lady.

"I don't know, but I am tired of this sort of thing, and I will be a king!"

And did he not sally forth and depart into space, and become a king indeed, King of Cocos Island in the Southern Pacific?

I am convinced that Uncle Hugh became a king. He was the very incarnation of "once upon a time." No wonder that when he joined me in my childhood's enterprises I felt the spell, weird and mysterious, which surrounded him. It was at that time he had, for reasons, abdicated his throne, cast off his feathered crown, his silver bracelets, his war-paint and laid by his arms. Why?

This chest full of letters and memoranda and maps and scraps sayeth not. There is nothing but the statement: "For two years dressed and painted in same manner as that tribe," written on the fly-leaf of the book.

Surely, although he went back to civilization for a while, it was his intention to return to his throne. Perhaps he was seeking for a queen to share his kingdom, Quixotic, of Micomicon. Doubtless, forlorn, his subjects are waiting for him now, praying to their gods of the wind and the storm for a sign.

What is it in the soul of man that cries: "Go forth"? Whither we know not; for what purpose, who can tell? The race which peopled the Queen Charlotte Islands came in great war canoes from the West. From far-away Ireland came Uncle Hugh. "Forward!" cried the Stewart clan. "Weena! Weena!" yelled the savage Haidars, as, goaded by what fearful cataclysm, what

deadly fear, what noble aspiration, they, ages ago, dared the vast ocean and ventured on the unknown seas.

You close your eyes, and in a moment you are sailing out of the gray past, in a great galley such as is pictured on the tomb of Rameses the Great, with highly cultivated adventurers, away and away eastward across the Pacific. You are carrying civilization, and the arts to the savage nations of the East, and all the legendary lore and science and religious observance, and the customs accumulated through thousands and thousands of years of struggle and defeat and victory. For you are a Haidar from Haidarabad crying: "Forward!" as you sally forth to give the benighted savage his battle-cry of "Weena! Weena!" Or are you, few in number, to be wrecked, as traditions say, upon that distant shore, and are your progeny to decay and degenerate into a wild and brutal clan holding the remnants of your wisdom in wretched tatters of distorted legend? By what mysterious force was Uncle Hugh impelled to adventure among his degraded and degenerate descendants (for you are convinced by now that Hugh is an Irish-Scotch-Hindoo, and that the Haidars are Hindoo-Irish-Americans)? To redeem them, "Forward!" he cries. But they advance not. "Weena! Weena!" they yell and walk backward, degenerating, oblivious, fading more and more until they become the faintest shadow of a past, forgetting and forgotten, vanished into the moonlight and the dark; for does not your goal in going "forward" depend entirely upon where your eyes are set?

Here you perceive a paragraph in Sproat's volume wherein he suggests that "Quanteat," the great god worshipped by the Haidars as only second to the moon, was a wondrous chief or "*white man*" of former times

whom they had credited with divine attributes. Ha! a light, brilliant and dazzling, breaks in upon you. Hugh was not only a king, he was a god! He shared the heavens with the sun and moon; the ocean with Hai-de-la-na, the killer whale. He blended his war-cry with the voices of the storm; why, then, did he cease to reign?

Hugh was proud of his descent from King Fergus I, the Irish King of Scotland (it always tickled him that the Scotch were originally Irish), and from King Robert II, the progenitors of the Stewart clan. Their motto, "Forward!" surging in his blood, urged him forever to strive up and on. For him the world was full of great adventures; for him the galleons and the golden city; for him Elysium, Hesperides, and the Island of Irish myth, Tir-na-n'oge—Land of Eternal Youth and Joy. These are the glorious day-dreams of humanity. But the gods dream not, they have no delusions; they are wide-eyed; they know all. Who would bear the burdens of a god?

Gazing at the sunset, you and I who have been pondering these matters place Uncle Hugh with the gods that were. Now we comprehend why he descended from his high heaven to the earthly plane. Perhaps, like other gods long gone, the hideous things for which he was held responsible weighed him down—the fearful prayers for vengeance, the outcries of despair, the few small grains of gratitude, the fawning and the fear, the tears of saints and sinners, the dreadful load of blame; forever sleepless and beholding all.

"Ah, yes!" we murmur, "who would be a god?"

Perhaps we think that, having traced Uncle Hugh's pedigree from a mariner to a deity, we have reached the top of the impossible. But there is yet another and super-

The Arms of the
Revd Hugh Stewart
and on an Escutcheon
of Pretence Vert a Lion
Rampt Or Armed &
Langued Gules
HYDER ALLY.
Tigesing Rajah of Bednore — Hyder Ali Sultan of Mysore
Nusrammessa — Jacob Cumac of Grammont in Co. Louth, Lieut. Col. H.E.I.C.S.
dau of Tigesing and niece of Hyder Ali
Arthur Robert Cumac — Newburgh — Eliza Mariamne only daut of Jacob Cumac.
Arthur Robt Cumac — Eliza Mariamne Cumac — Revd Hugh Stewart
Hugh Robert Stewart

LINEAGE OF UNCLE HUGH

lative adventure, this time into the confines of purgatory itself, for behold the London *Globe* of February 7, 1887! It contains the account of Captain Stewart's encounter with a renowned ghost in the haunted ruins of a church in Italy.

We have heard Uncle Hugh relate this tragic tale with a wild look in his eye which sufficiently declared that he was recounting an actual occurrence, and although, like the doughty Quixote himself, who, prone upon his back, battered, blood-stained, trampled and dust-laden, still raised his cry of "Victory!" Hugh did not acknowledge defeat, yet he had at last charged headlong the unknown, the intangible, the unreal. Therefore awe was in his voice as he recalled his conflict and remembered that he had been overcome by powers inhuman and invulnerable.

It is true that in the newspaper report one can trace a note of polite incredulity which does not affect the event nor cast doubt upon the facts. But we who have beheld Uncle Hugh hail the world as his oyster, and have rejoiced that the flesh, civil and savage, had for him no terrors, are prepared to see him tackle even the devil himself, which indeed he appears to have done on this famous occasion.

The *Globe* says:

A story which has moved all Italy is given by one of the most respectable and trustworthy of the journals of Milan, and signed by Signor P. Bettoli, a well-known name in the Italian literature of the day.

On leaving S—— by the mountain gate, turning to the right and proceeding for about a couple of miles, you may observe a small collection of miserable hovels crowned by a high church tower. These sordid hovels and this imposing tower are known by the name of San Vernanzio.

In the year 1787 there came to San Vernanzio a tribe of gypsies who, settling in the place, built these miserable huts, and lived for many years in the midst of the poverty and dirt to which they are accustomed. But as the tribe increased in numbers they became more bold, until their robberies and violence aroused the authorities and several of their chiefs were taken, and one or two of them executed, while the rest were imprisoned or had to fly to avoid the law. Soon afterward, just at the beginning of this century, the remainder of the tribe, with the women, girls, and boys, submitted to conversion to Catholicism, on condition of having secured to them full possession of the spot on which their miserable hovels had been erected. This was accorded on their consenting to erect a church in the enclosed space to which they had acquired sole right of possession. But as soon as the building was completed the whole community disappeared as if by magic, and nothing was ever heard of the gypsies from that day. The hovels and the little church still remain, falling to ruin, it is true, but still marking with a dark spot the wild and desolate place where they stand.

Rumor soon declared the spot to be accursed. Voices were heard at dead of night, and lights were seen moving about among the ruins. One or two persons who, more courageous than the rest, have ventured to remain at night within respectful distance of the church, have testified to the unearthly noises which have issued from its walls, and amid the blue phosphoric light thrown all around have beheld strange figures, attired in costumes of ancient date, walking amid the mouldering remains of the church and the habitations which surround it. A priest once attempted to sanctify the church by worship, but he was thrown with violence from the place even while on his knees before the high altar.

Since that time the place has been utterly abandoned, and now, half buried amid weeds and brambles, it is almost forgotten, nothing remaining to view but the tower.

In the middle of September last the neighboring town of S—— was visited by Captain Stewart. "The Signor Stewart," says Bettoli, "is a man of about forty years of age, not strictly handsome but of noble and serious aspect, and of a powerful and energetic temperament. He heard of the mysterious apparition at San Vernanzio, and at once determined to pass a night among the ruins. For this purpose he visited the place during the day and carefully examined every nook and corner of each of the hovels which surround the church. He chose for his night's lodging the most ruinous of all, the one whose mouldering wall still leans against the porch. He repaired alone to the place, carrying the camp bedstead which accompanies him on his travels, and, armed with two six-chambered revolvers, one in each hand, he retired to rest.

"And now," says Signor Bettoli, "let me tell the rest of the story as I had it from Captain Stewart's own lips:

"'I had been waiting for the hour of midnight. The silence was intense, and, worn out with fatigue, I was fast sinking into slumber when I was suddenly aroused by a terrible noise which seemed to proceed from below the earth, loud and rumbling like distant thunder, or, rather, the passage of artillery along a badly paved street. At the same moment, and while the threatening sound still continued, the darkness was suddenly dispersed by a dim phosphoric light, pale and yet bright and steady, like the lighting of a match against the wall, and in the midst of this atmosphere of pallid vapory hue there appeared a human form, undefined and indistinct enough to leave me in doubt as to the semblance whether of man or woman. It might have been that of a nun or abbess, but as I gazed I fancied it to be rather that of a poet or clerk of Dante's time, for the bandelets and head-gear of that period were strikingly apparent. I rose up on the bed and gazed fixedly upon my strange visitor.

"'"Who are you?" I cried, "and what do you want with me?"

"'No answer was returned, and amid the subterranean noise and phosphorescent light the figure still continued to advance.

"'"Take care!" cried I again. "I warn you that if you advance a step nearer I will blow your brains out."

"'But my warning was of no avail. The shadow still approached. Then, raising my right arm I fired one after another the six bullets from my first revolver. For a moment I was so blinded by the smoke that I lost sight of everything. When the smoke had disappeared I still beheld in the pale-blue light the figure still advancing toward me until it stood close to the foot of my bed.

"'A cold sweat broke out upon my forehead. I lost consciousness and fell backward, fainting, on my pillow.'"

The *Globe* then remarks:

In spite of the disbelief we cold-blooded Northerners are bound to maintain concerning the exactness of Signor Bettoli's account, we cannot help feeling somewhat moved by the honored name of the hero of the adventure, given as it is in full and without disguise by the narrator.

If you are in search of excitement, you have it here. By now, with your head full of cannibals, murderers, gold mines, sorcerers, men eaten alive, dreadful gods, killer whales, head-hunters, Chinese pirates, wrecked merchantmen, White Dog Island, the imminent deadly breach at Canton, the Abyssinian desert, and goblins from the other world, it seems to me that your frame of mind will be about as blissful as is possible for mortal man upon this orb.

As for me, I sat before this sea chest of Uncle Hugh, with the photograph of him before me, and with the documentary evidence of his astonishing accomplishments on either hand, and was transported at will into scenes of

the most glorious carnage. Now was I amid a terrific battle with Chinese junks, the hideous pirates falling overboard with yells agreeably ghastly and pleasantly appalling; now mad Arabs or frantic Dervishes overwhelmed me, numberless as the sands of the desert, only to be scattered by adorable Hugh as though they were feathers before the blast; now was I bound to a stake on White Dog Island, to be instantly burned alive by the pirate hordes, when from the sky came Uncle Hugh, and, with a blow, a thousand pigtailed villains bit the dust. In a wink I am about to be eaten by the Haidar savages, who chant the death-song while they bite pieces out of each other to sharpen their appetites, when, hark! Hugh's war-cry, "Forward!" rings in my ear, and after a sanguinary conflict I am saved for further adventures. Now are we painted vermilion, tattooed, decked in head-dresses of feathers, tracking prodigious animals through horrid jungles, harpooning whales, diving for pearls, discovering gold, wooing copper-colored maidens by the light of the moon, and finally here we are, with "eyes starting from their spheres," and each particular hair standing on end, in battle—furious, superhuman, and incredible—with the very spirits of darkness, firing bullets through ghostly gallows-birds who, emitting fires infernal and accursed, pay no heed but rob us of our reason.

Truly, Aladdin's carpet was nothing to this! The fisherman's jar from which sprang the jinn surely could not hold a candle to Hugh's sea chest, exhaling visions innumerable, awesome, and ecstatic. "Forward!" we cry, but we can go no farther. Hugh's rallying call is vain. Here is a barrier he may not pass. In San Vernanzio, dark, wild, and desolate, he has to pause, for the dreadful demons mock his weapons and laugh his battle-

cry to scorn. He has tilted at a windmill. He has been vanquished by the giant Pandafallando, and lies upon his back crying "Victory! Dulcinea is the loveliest lady in the world."

## DON QUIXOTE

Romance is dead, and knights have had their day,
Old Time now dances to a soberer tune,
No longer Strephon worships Phyllis's shoon,
The very gods have fled this mortal fray;
Yet one heart owns fair Dulcinea's sway,
And bears her banner, praying as a boon
That he may dare the mountains of the moon,
The filchèd stars before her feet to lay.
Here Don Quixote holds his forehead high,
His lance in rest, his oriflamme unfurl'd,
Tilting at windmills or 'gainst giants hurl'd,
Honor and Truth and Love his battle-cry,
Demanding only of a laughing world
Gently to live and with brave heart to die.

Wisest of madmen, maddest of the wise!
We would adventure where thy fancies lead;
Where knightly thought quickens to knightly deed,
Where thy defeat shames meaner victories.
Did all men view life's pageant through thine eyes,
Wield righteous sword when grief and weakness plead,
Then were this world from all enchanters freed,
All mortals listed in thy high emprise.
Quixotic we would be—to still declare
Our cot a castle, and our lass a queen;
Upright, unconquered, unafraid, serene;
Finding God's poorest creatures brave and fair;
Shedding a glory over all things mean.
If this be folly, folly be our share.

# XVI

# "RUFFIAN DICK"

ONCE upon a time there lived a King who had a beautiful daughter. This princess preferred the love of a poor knight to the throne of her father, so she followed him in the guise of a page. At this the King proclaimed her an outcast from his house and heart. After many adventures the princess and the knight returned and craved forgiveness of the King, who pardoned them, and they were married and lived happy ever after.

This is, of course, the ordinary, well regulated fairy-tale, and this, equally of course, is just what you would expect to have happened to some forebear of Uncle Hugh. Surely enough it is precisely what did happen. The great King in this case was Tippoo Sahib, Sultan of Mysore in India, and his daughter, about the year 1780, ran away with an Irish officer named Newburg. She was disowned by her father, and lost caste for having loved a European. But she and her lover returned and begged pardon of the Sultan. He not only forgave them their trespass, but bestowed a large dowry upon the princess, who was married to the poor soldier and returned with him to Ireland. This was the great-great-grandmother of Uncle Hugh, whose name was Hugh Robert Newburg Stewart.

The Sultan of Mysore was the son of Haidar Ali Khan Badahur, Monarch of the Haidar Indians. So now you see why Hugh was impelled to adventure among the Haidars of Queen Charlotte Islands.

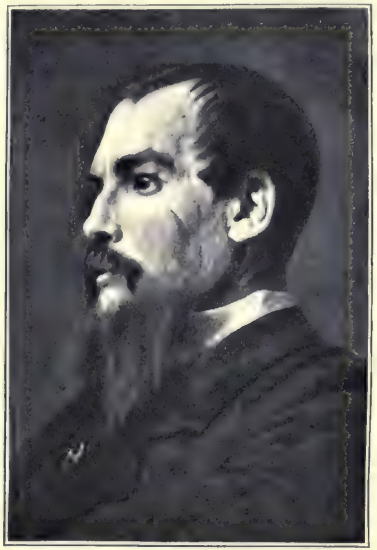
Tippoo Sahib was slain in battle at his capital, Seringapatam, in 1799. His saddle and the trappings of his horse are now exhibited in Windsor Castle. Other articles from his palace are at Fife House, Whitehall, London. His daughter died the wife of an Irish gentleman, leaving a family of nine children. Thus we have Hugh an Irish-Scotch-Hindoo, as already suspected.

A man may be known by the company he keeps, and he will admire in others those qualities which he would foster in himself. Thus Uncle Hugh's devotion to "Chinese Gordon" leads one, naturally, to comprehend his affection for Sir Richard Burton, an associate and contemporary of Gordon, who called himself an English-Irish-Scotch-Arab, having, mixed with the English blood in his veins, that of the Bourbon Louis XIV, of Rob Roy McGregor, and of the Burton tribe of gypsies.

Behold! a set of pictures of Burton with his "brow of a god and his jaw of a devil," which used to hang in Uncle Hugh's room with a strange inscription framed therein:

Sir Richard Burton, my old friend and companion. The only man in the world that I believed in.

If one has read the life of Richard Burton, written by his wife, one can well understand that the strong, resolute, mystic, religious, adventurous, self-reliant, poetic character would inspire a man like Uncle Hugh with admiration and confidence. Yet the inscription is a sad commentary on Uncle Hugh's experience of human nature. That he should take the trouble to blazon such a statement in black and white makes one wonder through what disillusionment he had passed.



Sir Richard Burton.

*My Old Friend and Companion*

*The Only Man in the World that I believed in.*

Hugh Rich Neuburgh Stewart.
Capt Royal Navy
Junior Carlton Club &c  Cockburnian Club

THE SET OF PICTURES FROM UNCLE HUGH'S ROOM

Burton's strain of Romany accounted for his vagabond tendencies, intolerant of all convention or restraint, which procured him the sobriquet of "Ruffian Dick" at Oxford and in his early days in India. Before middle age he had, as Lord Derby said, "compressed into his life more of study, more of hardship, and more of successful enterprise and adventure than would have sufficed to fill up the existence of half a dozen ordinary men."

This was the man Hugh had chosen for his "friend and companion," whose creed was, "A man should seek Honor, not honors," and whose motto ran, "Omne solum forti patria"— "every region is a strong man's home."

Lady Burton writes: "Richard's idea was that every man by doing all the good he could in this life, always working for others, for the human race, always *acting* 'excelsior,' should leave a track of light behind him on this world as he passes through."

Lady Burton quotes these tributes:

A very extraordinary man who toiled every hour and minute for forty and a half years, and distinguished himself in every possible way. He has done more than any other six men in her Majesty's dominions and is one of the best, noblest and truest that breathes. . . . His languages, knowledge and experience upon every subject, or any single act of his life, would have raised any other man to the top of the ladder of honor and fortune. . . .

Self-reliant, self-sustained, seeking no support from heaven or earth, substituting self-will for faith and strenuous effort for divine assistance, endowed by nature with a frame of iron and muscles of steel, he was an athlete who might have figured in the arena in Greek or Roman times. . . .

Though standing nearly six feet high, he did not look a tall man, his broad shoulders, deep chest, and splendidly developed limbs deceiving the eye as to his real height. While the best of ordinary men never aspire to know more than something of everything or everything of something, he might, without exaggeration, be said to know everything of everything.

His pilgrimage to Mecca in 1853, disguised, as one may here observe, as an Indian Pathan, made him famous— "with hair falling upon his shoulders, a long beard, face and hands, arms and feet stained with a thin coat of henna, behold Mirza Abdullah of Bushiri. A blunder, a hasty action, a misjudged word, a prayer, a bow not strictly the right shibboleth, and my bones would have whitened the desert sand."

Burton's great distinguishing feature was his courage. No braver man than "Ruffian Dick" ever lived. His daring was of that romantic order which revels in danger for danger's sake. No crisis, however appalling, could shake his splendid nerve. He was as cool when his life hung on a hair's breadth as when he sat smoking in his own snuggery.

He was the first Englishman to enter Mecca; the first to explore Somaliland; the first to discover the great lakes of Central Africa, anticipating Stanley.

His journey to Harrar, the Somali capital, was even more hazardous than the pilgrimage to Mecca. Burton vanished into the desert, and was not heard from for four months. When he reappeared he had not only been to Harrar but had talked with the King, stayed ten days there in deadly peril and ridden back across the desert, almost without food and water, running the gantlet of the Somali spears all the way. Undeterred by this experience, he set out again but was checked by a skirmish with the tribes in which one of his young

officers was killed; Captain Speke was wounded in eleven places and Burton himself, having fought his way single-handed, his only weapon a sabre, through 150 savages, had a javelin thrust through his jaws.

He was, as has been well said, an Elizabethan born out of his time. His was the spirit of Drake and Raleigh and of Hawkins. He was poet, scholar, soldier; the best swordsman, the best shot, the best horseman. He spoke twenty-nine languages, not to mention his study of the speech of monkeys. He made the best translation of the "Arabian Nights." He published eighty works of travel. Athlete, philosopher, historian, diplomat, mystic—the Admirable Crichton of his time.

Wrote Théophile Gautier:

There is a reason for the fantasy of nature which causes an Arab to be born in Paris, or a Greek in Auvergne. The mysterious voice of blood which is silent for generations, or only utters a confused murmur, speaks at rare intervals a more intelligible language. In the general confusion race claims its own, and some forgotten ancestor asserts his rights. Who knows what alien drops are mingled with our blood? The great migrations from the table-lands of India, the descents of the Northern races, the Roman and Arab invasions have all left their marks. Instincts which seem bizarre spring from these confused recollections, these hints of distant country. The vague desire of primitive fatherland moves such minds as retain the more vivid memories of the past. Hence, the wild unrest that wakens in certain spirits the need of flight, such as the cranes and the swallows feel when kept in bondage; the impulses that make man leave his luxurious life to bury himself in the steppes, the desert, the pampas, the Sahara. He goes to seek his brothers. It would be easy to point out the intellectual fatherland of our greatest minds. Lamartine, De Musset, and De Vigny are

English; De Lacroix is an Anglo-Indian, Victor Hugo a Spaniard, Ingres belongs to the Italy of Florence and Rome.

Burton as a little child would lie on his back in the broiling sun and cry: "How I love a bright, burning sun!" "Nature speaking in early years," as he remarks.

It would seem that Uncle Hugh's inclination toward these heroic spirits had some root in the past. Look at Burton's picture, and at the inscription beneath it and ponder. Burton was Hugh's senior by ten years. Perhaps it was on his return from Mecca that Hugh first encountered him. Hugh would then have been about twenty-two. This is the age when one must needs have a hero to worship. It was Burton's boast that he was ever ready to go anywhere at ten minutes' notice. Here we see the source of Uncle Hugh's "ready at the Queen's command." Burton's mysticism, too, is reflected in Hugh's encounter with the apparitions in Italy.

Burton was a great mesmerist and would frequently mesmerize Lady Burton that she might foretell the result of his journeys. She became so subject to his power that he could send her to sleep from a great distance. Also he appeared to her in the spirit many hours after he had sailed away from England, before their marriage.

Says Lady Burton:

At 2.00 A. M.; the door opened and he came into my room. A current of warm air came toward my bed. He said: "Good-by, my poor child. My time is up and I have gone, but do not grieve, I shall be back in less than three years, and *I am your destiny*. Good-by." He held up a letter, looked long at me with those gypsy eyes and went out, shutting the door.

Lady Burton arose and rushed into the hall, but no one was visible. A letter came by post the next morning at eight o'clock. Burton had left London at six o'clock on the previous evening, eight hours before Lady Burton saw him in the night.

Burton also could read hands at a glance. "With many," says Lady Burton, "he would drop the hand at once and turn away, nor would anything induce him to speak a word about it."

Lady Burton's marriage to Burton was foretold by a gypsy woman of the Burton tribe long before she met her husband. "You will bear the same name as our tribe, and be right proud of it. You will be as we are but far greater than we." Some time after she came out of the convent, where she was at school, and encountered Burton who stood still, startled. She felt a strange agitation, and said to her companion as she passed on without greeting: "That man will marry me."

After Lady Burton's death she appeared in broad daylight to Justin McCarthy and his daughter as they walked in Brighton. "There goes Lady Burton," said Miss McCarthy, as she passed them.

Lady Burton was at the moment dead in London.

Both Gordon and Burton loved children. When visiting friends, Burton was frequently discovered playing on the floor with the children of the house. Gordon founded a home for ragged boys, and during his six years' work as Commanding Royal Engineer at Gravesend he cared for hundreds of poor urchins who had no other friend. Chalked up on doors and walls one might read in those days scrawled in childish, uneven letters, "God bless the Kernel." "The Kernel" was Gordon, who conducted during his spare hours a school for ragged boys.

He called them his "kings," and taught these mud-larks to be "gentle" men.

This was the Gordon who went on a mission of peace from the Khedive of Egypt to the King of Abyssinia, the most cruel and savage of cruel and savage kings, and who treated Gordon with the greatest insolence.

"Do you know that I could kill you?" he asked, glaring at Gordon like a tiger.

"I am quite ready to die," replied Gordon. "In killing me you will only confer a favor by opening a door I must not open for myself."

"Then my power has no terrors for you?" said the King.

"None whatever," replied Gordon.

And the King stood powerless before the man who knew no fear.

On leaving Egypt, Gordon said of his successor: "He must have my iron constitution, for Khartoum is too much for any one who has not. Then he must have my contempt for money, otherwise the people will never believe in his sincerity. Lastly, he must have my contempt for death."

Gordon led his troops in China, himself unarmed save for a little cane which he always carried, and which the soldiers of his "ever victorious army" called his "magic wand," for he seemed to bear a charmed life. He hated the "plausibilities" of religion, but for his ragged urchin "kings" he said: "I pray for each one of them day by day," and his Bible accompanied him on all campaigns.

Burton's inseparable companion was a volume wherein was bound in one cover the works of Shakespeare, Euclid, and the Bible. This never left him in his wild adventures.

When his restless spirit sent him to Africa just previous to his marriage, he left some verses to fame with Lady Burton:

"Fame pointed to a grisly shore
Where all breathes death—Earth, sea, and air.
Her glorious accents sound once more,
'Go meet me there!'

"Mine ear will hear no other word,
No other thought my heart will know.
Is this a sin? Oh, pardon, Lord,
Thou mad'st me so."

Burton was a great joker and loved to horrify staid people with ghastly stories of eating fat cabin boys at sea, and other Munchausen tales blood-curdling and confounding to Mrs. Grundy and her tribe. He loved to paint himself a very black and frightful devil, and to enjoy the amazed horror of his listeners. All these traits must have appealed strongly to Uncle Hugh, making him a very willing slave to that affection we see indicated in this inscription under the portrait of his "old friend and companion." What Uncle Hugh was to me as a little child that was Sir Richard Burton to Uncle Hugh as a young sailorman of twenty-two. What Gordon must have been to his ragamuffins, that was Uncle Hugh to my childhood's fancy.

Quoth the teller of tales: "Once upon a time there lived a King."

Said Chinese Gordon to his mud-larks: "It is in *all* men to be kingly."

Said "Ruffian Dick": "Man should seek Honor, *not* honors."

Spake Hugh: "These men were my friends!"

# PART III

## MY FATHER

# XVII

# ISHERWOOD

GHOSTLY experiences are apt to be treated with scorn. Sir Oliver Lodge, the great scientist, is at this moment being roundly denounced for asserting that he has acquired actual personal proof of a life after death. Yet, if one considers wireless telegraphy and established telepathy, it may not seem impossible that one mind, concentrated on another in a moment of extreme agony, may impress that other mind, properly attuned, to such an extent that an image may be projected so clearly as to seem to be visible to the organs of sight.

Mr. Edwin Booth in his letters declared that two nights before Mrs. Booth's death in 1863, she came to him in New York, she being at the time in Dorchester, Massachusetts. He heard her distinctly say, "Come to me, my darling, I am almost frozen," and that, when he was speeding to her on the train, not dreaming that she was seriously ill, each time he looked from the car window he saw Mrs. Booth dead, with a white cloth tied around her head and chin. He arrived in Dorchester to find her in her coffin.

When I was at school, a boy in the next bed to me awoke in the night weeping, and said he had dreamed that his father was dead. A telegram arrived the next morning to say that his father had died during the night.

Hundreds of instances have been corroborated where captains of vessels have received communications, either

verbal or by the appearance of a figure, directing them toward other vessels in distress, or warning them of danger. These experiences are classed with tales of the sea-serpent, which may yet be captured and confound unbelievers.

A relative of my mother, Admiral Sir Houston Stewart, being a sailor, believed firmly in warnings of this nature, and although there is no evidence to that effect, he was always convinced that not chance alone controlled his inclination and handled his helm on a certain occasion.

It was the custom in "the palmy days" for actors to band together and take theatres for the summer, and to play a season of repertoire, on the order of our present stock companies. During the year 1857, my father, John Raymond, J. H. Stoddart, and some others occupied a theatre in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This was christened Sothern's Lyceum.

The season of 1857 was not crowned with success, and although the players made many friends they made no money; in fact, they met with financial disaster. Many desperate expedients were undertaken to arouse the apathetic public. I have a programme of an occasion projected by my father, wherein, with cheerful omnipotence, he undertook to deliver "Three lectures on the Drama, beginning with the Dawn of Civilization, and embracing the history of the theatres of India, China, Japan, France, Germany, England, tracing the growth of the play instinct throughout the Middle Ages to the present time. With a description of folk-lore, mystery-plays, the origin of Punch and Judy, and a dissertation on the marionettes of Italy." No seats were sold for these three entertainments, the inhabitants of Halifax remaining unmoved; so a new bill was printed, declaring that "The demand for

# SOTHERN'S LYCEUM.

HALIFAX, N. S.

| | |
|---|---|
| Proprietor and Manager | Mr. Sothern. |
| Stage Manager | Mr. Dyott. |
| Assistant Stage Manager | Mr. Fisher. |
| Scenic Artist | Mr. Selwyn. |
| Prompter | Mr. E. Spinosa. |

Doors open at half-past seven; performance commencing at eight precisely.

N. B.—Police are in constant attendance to preserve order.

## FUN! FUN! FUN!!

GREAT ATTRACTION!!!

## RAYMOND'S BENEFIT.

## THREE NEW PIECES,

Instead of which he will appear

Comedy, Vaudeville, and Farce.

First and only time of

"WHACK."

The INDIAN NIGHTINGALE. (Minehaha), will appear for this night only.

MONDAY EVENING, AUGUST 17, 1857,

First time in this city of Buckstone's Comedy, in three acts, entitled,

# Married Life!

| | |
|---|---|
| MR. CODDLE | MR. CHIPPENDALE |
| MRS. CODDLE | MRS. SYLVESTER |
| MR. LYNX | MR. STODDART |
| MRS. LYNX | MISS MONTAYNE |
| MR. YOUNG HUSBAND | MR. REYNOLDS |
| MRS. YOUNG HUSBAND | MRS. A. TAYOR |
| MR. DISMAL | MR. FISHER |
| MRS. DISMAL | MISS SOUTHERN |
| MR. HENRY DOVE | MR. RAYMOND |
| MRS. HENRY DOVE | MISS CUSHNIE |

## SONG,

"MY LOVE HE IS A SAILOR."

BY THE INDIAN NIGHTINGALE.

## BALLAD,

BY MISS CUSHNIE.

After which, a new Farce called,

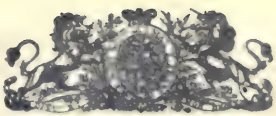
# Raymond Worried by Sothern.

In which they will sing the celebrated Duett from

"IL PURITANI,"

*From the collection of Robert Gould Shaw, Boston*

August 17, 1857



# SOTHERN'S LYCEUM.

HALIFAX, N. S.

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| Stage Manager | Mr. Dyott. |
| Assistant Stage Manager | Mr. Fisher. |
| Scenic Artist | Mr. Selwyn. |
| Prompter | Mr. E. Spinosa. |

## NOTICE.

The Dramatic Season positively concludes on TUESDAY, the 25th inst.

Doors open at half-past seven; performance commencing at eight precisely.

N. B.—Police are in constant attendance to preserve order.

## WEDNESDAY EVENING, AUGUST 19.

POSITIVELY THE

## LAST NIGHT BUT FOUR

OF THE SEASON.

## BENEFIT OF

# MRS. SOTHERN.

Being under the immediate Patronage of

ADMIRAL SIR HOUSTON STEWART, K. C. B.

On which occasion will be presented for the first and only time,

Oliver Goldsmith's fine old Comedy of

# SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER!

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| SIR CHARLES MARLOW | | MR. LYN |
| HARDCASTLE | | MR. CHIPPENDALE |
| YOUNG MARLOW | | MR. SOTHERN |
| HASTINGS | | MR. STODDART |
| TONY LUMPKIN | With Original Song. | MR. RAYMOND |
| STINGO (the Landlord | | MR. REYNOLDS |
| DIGGORY | | MR. FISHER |
| COMPANIONS OF TONY | | MR. SELWYN |
| | | MR. MILLER |
| MISS MARIN ASTLE | | MISS SOUTHERN |

*From the collection of Robert Gould Shaw, Boston*

August 19, 1857

PROGRAMMES OF SOTHERN'S LYCEUM

seats had caused so much confusion that it had been determined to condense the material of the three lectures into one, an arrangement which, it was hoped, would meet with the approval of the hundreds of persons eager to attend," and it was urged that "Mr. Sothern's unexpected call to New York to fulfil an important engagement would make it necessary for those desiring seats to purchase them immediately." The programme is pathetic enough as I look at it to-day, and think of my boyish father and young mother trying thus to raise the wind. But it was no good; the populace remained indifferent, and the wolf approached the door. Meanwhile the spirits of the players never flagged. The scene-painter of the theatre was one Isherwood, who also played parts. When business had reached its lowest ebb, my father said to Isherwood: "Isherwood, you must have a benefit; at least," said he, "half the success of this thing is due to the scenery. People never think of the scene-painter; it is not fair. Night after night these thousands of people applaud; we, the actors, take the calls, the credit; no one speaks of the scenic artist, who toils in darkness and obscurity."

Isherwood, during this eulogy, lost sight of the fact that hardly any one was, or had been, in front; he looked pleased and muttered words deprecatory.

"No, no!" said my father. "It shall be a benefit. I will make the announcement to-night, and you, you shall say a few words of appreciation."

"I daren't speak," said Isherwood; "I never made a speech in my life!"

"Nonsense! I will prompt you through the hole in the curtain," said my father. (To the uninitiated, let it be known that there is usually a small hole in the centre of

the curtain whence the audience may be observed from the stage.)

Isherwood, bashful and foolish, appeared before the footlights, his ear near the hole in the curtain.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said my father.

"Ladies and gentlemen," murmured Isherwood.

"The Scripture moveth us in sundry places," said my father.

"The Scripture moveth us——"

"Speak up!" cried a man in front. "Where's your voice?"

"In sundry places," said Isherwood.

"Louder!" said another.

"Queen Elizabeth," said my father through the hole in the curtain.

"Queen Elizabeth," repeated Isherwood.

"Never!"

"Never!"

"Stood on her——"

"Stood on her——"

"Head!"

"Head!"

"What's that?" said the voice.

"Without lifting her feet."

"Without lifting her feet."

"Who *are* you?" said the voice. "What are you driving at?"

Isherwood, confused, wandered away from the hole in the curtain, and could no longer hear my father, who vainly whispered behind it. Isherwood tried to find the hole in the curtain again, turning his back to the audience and looking as though he were catching flies.

"He is drunk!" remarked a sympathizer in front.

"Get off!" said another.

My father appeared at the side and came on the stage. He led Isherwood off.

"Speech!" cried the house.

"My friend, Mr. Isherwood," said my father, "is the scenic artist of this theatre. The enthusiasm of your reception has confused him; he is unaccustomed to speech-making. To Mr. Isherwood we are indebted for the gorgeous productions which have delighted your eye during our engagement in Halifax. His is the art which transcends nature, and creates an atmosphere so elusive that you might as well have no scenery at all. Upon the paint-frame day and night, in storm and shine, in sickness or in health, his mother dying, his wife starving——"

"He has no wife," said a voice.

"No," said my father; "but if he had, she would be starving. I repeat, his wife starving, his little children—although, of course, he has none—crying for bread; the scene-painter paints! paints! paints! We, whose labors have been lightened and whose art has been illuminated by Mr. Isherwood's genius, now propose to express our appreciation in the form of a benefit. This performance will call upon the full strength of the company. The artists concerned have with one accord proffered their valuable services free; the stage-hands, the gentlemen of the orchestra, our entire staff, bending the knee in acknowledgment and admiration, stand prepared to do or die for Isherwood. Isherwood forever!" cried my father.

Two or three people out of the small audience applauded. Isherwood had stood meanwhile, proud and panting with excitement, in the prompt entrance.

"One word more," said my father. "The unique, remarkable and overpowering feature of this entertainment

is that there will be no charge for admission! Tickets will be issued free!"

"Hooray!" cried a man in the gallery.

The face of Isherwood fell at his feet!

"Hooray!" cried the meagre gathering in unison.

My father bowed himself off. Then, putting his head around the proscenium arch suddenly, he shouted: "But——"

The audience turned to him.

"But there will be a collection taken up at the door!"

When my mother had said good-by to her family, on the day of her wedding, there had been many tears and protestations.

"Remember, Fanny," Sir Houston had said, "if you want me at any time, no matter if I am at the other end of the world, let me know and I will go to you."

They were devoted and the admiral meant what he said.

In August, 1857, Admiral Sir Houston Stewart, in command of the North Atlantic fleet, set sail for Halifax.

Things began to look pretty badly for the players at the Halifax Theatre. One final play was to be offered in the hope of melting the public heart, and then the last card had been played. Everybody was busy with preparation. My mother was working like a busy bee at the wardrobe; especially did she labor at the costume of a little girl in the company who was poor and new to the game. This girl had to have a pair of embroidered slippers. My mother had been a famous belle in Ireland, and she had by her some ball slippers, memorials of joyous days gone by. My mother had the smallest foot in the world, but her slippers just fitted this child. She

covered them with black velvet and embroidered the velvet with blue braid and spangles in an intricate design. (The girl for whom they were made gave me these slippers thirty years after—I who was as yet unborn.)

The play failed. Creditors became pressing. The lecture was abandoned. It was no more a question of how to get people into the theatre, but how to get out of town so that the engagements for the winter could be fulfilled. Where was the money to come from wherewith to purchase the railway-tickets for the company and to satisfy the quite amiable creditors? Not long since I met an officer of the garrison who had known my father when he was a subaltern at Halifax during this time. He told me this story and said that the substantial citizens of the town were about to come to the rescue when help arrived, as it were, from the blue.

It having been rumored that my father and his company were about to leave the city, some half dozen of his creditors waited upon him. He received them at the theatre during a rehearsal, Mr. Stoddart and Mr. John T. Raymond being present.

"Mr. Sothern," said the creditors, "we regard you and your troupe with esteem and affection, but we need our money, and while we sympathize with you in your misfortune, we must have some assurance that we will be paid. What security can you offer?"

"None," said my father. "None, but my word. I will pay, I promise."

"Sorry, but it won't do," said the amiable creditors.

"I have to get away to earn the money to pay you with," said my father, who had really an engagement at Wallack's Theatre in New York where he felt, with

the certainty of youth, that fame awaited him with open arms.

"It can't be done," said the creditors. "We shall have to detain you."

"But you must observe," said my desperate father, "that our earning power here is nil. You cannot get blood out of a stone. I'll pay you, I promise, when my ship comes in."

Said one of the creditors: "I'm afraid, Mr. Sothern, your ship is not likely to bring you an audience. Indeed, a whole fleet full of theatregoers will be necessary to meet your obligations."

Said Mr. Raymond: "I can call spirits from the vasty deep."

Said Mr. Stoddart: "And so can I, and so can any man. But will they come?"

My mother who had been listening to this, pale, fearful, terrified, now spoke. Said she: "The ship will come in. I know it. The ship will come in."

When one desires very much that some particular event shall happen and then shortly it does happen, one is apt to regard the occurrence as a dispensation of Providence. My mother always considered Sir Houston's arrival as beyond the realm of mere coincidence. He had promised to come to her should she want him. She had wanted him—and he came. Things began to look very dark, indeed, when one day the North Atlantic fleet slowly passed the fort at the mouth of the harbor.

"Boom!" went the guns—a salute. "Boom!" replied the vessels.

"It is my Admiral Houston," said my mother. "Our ship has come in."

The movements of war-ships are not accidental, nor is it the office of the navy to come to the rescue of distressed Thespians. Still, as I have said, Sir Houston was assured that it was not altogether the purposes of the admiralty nor any chance that steered him to Halifax, and nothing could ever persuade my mother but that some pitiful cherub had hovered over his helm. However, there Sir Houston was, a very angel of deliverance, and a most willing and capable angel he proved to be.

My father and mother hastened down to the harbor, and securing a rowboat went out to the flag-ship. There they were greeted by the admiral. Amid tears and laughter the adventures of the season were discussed and the help of the British navy implored.

Several performances were given "under the immediate patronage of Admiral Sir Houston Stewart, K. C. B." The occasion of the benefit of Mrs. Sothern especially being a gala night. The play was "She Stoops to Conquer," with my mother in the character of Miss Hardcastle.

The townsfolk who had remained cold to the allurements of the drama filled the theatre to view the officers and men of the fleet who attended in a body. The creditors were appeased. Preparations were made for departure to New York.

Those citizens and some officers of the garrison, whose regard for my father inspired a desire to help him, waited on him with a purse which they had subscribed. With much emotion he declined it; with tears my mother thanked them.

Another scene of rescue was subsequently enacted on the stage of the Halifax Theatre in 1859.

This time not the British navy, but the army took part in stirring events.

The relief of Lucknow, during the Indian mutiny, occurred in 1857. In 1858, Dion Boucicault's drama, "Jessie Brown," was produced at Wallack's Theatre in New York, and in 1859 at Sothern's Lyceum in Halifax. That very Highland regiment which had performed such an heroic part in the relief happened to be quartered at Halifax, and the commander of the regiment gave permission for some of his men who had participated in the actual drama to re-enact their characters on the mimic scene.

A gigantic Highland officer, six feet six in height, lent my father his uniform to wear in the character of Randall McGregor. My father's height was five feet nine, therefore the kilt was about twelve inches too long for him. However, with my mother's help and the aid of some safety-pins, he took a reef in it, and having adjusted to his head the huge bonnet made of ostrich feathers—which is as large as a grenadier's bearskin—he cut a very fine figure. He rehearsed in his costume, and when brandishing his claymore, he cried: "To arms, men! One charge more, and this time drive your steel down the throats of the murderous foe!" he felt that success was assured. At the last moment, however, he found the great ostrich bonnet so very much too big for his head that, to avoid possible accident, in addition to the strap and chain which is worn under the chin he, just before going on the stage, secured it to his head with several pieces of piano wire which went from the front of the head-piece about the back of his head, and from the rear part of it to underneath his chin. This ingenious device, invisible under the shaggy feathers, rendered the toppling busby practically immovable.

At the end of Act III the Redan Fort, which commands a certain part of the city of Lucknow, is besieged by the rebel Sepoys. Breastworks with embrasures for cannon run across the back of the stage. The garrison is exhausted.

"Ten men alone are fit for service. Ten men to repulse a thousand."

"My friends," says the Reverend David Blount, "it is fitting you should know that the last hour has arrived. The last earthly hope is gone. Let us address ourselves to Heaven. In an hour not one of these men will be living."

"But," cries Mrs. Campbell, "*we* shall be living. Oh, recollect Cawnpore. These children will be hacked to pieces before our eyes, ourselves reserved for worse than death. Kill us. If you leave us here you are accessories to our dishonor—our murder."

Distant drums are heard.

Cries Blount: "They come! They come! Already they begin to ascend the hill!"

"Quick!" cries Mrs. Campbell, "or it will be too late. Remember we are women and may not have the courage to kill ourselves."

*Randall:* Murderers! They come for their prey. (*Dashing down his bonnet*) Yes! I will tear it from their rage. Soldiers, one volley, your last. To free your countrywomen from the clutches of the demons, one volley to their noble and true hearts, and then give your steel to the enemy. Load!

(*The women form a group and cling together.*

*Blount:* (*Reading the service for the dead*) In the midst of life we are in death.

(*A distant wail of bagpipes is heard.*)

*Jessie Brown:* (*Starts up*) Hark! Hark! Dinna ye hear it! Dinna ye hear it! Ay! I'm no dreaming. It's the slogan of the Highlanders! We're saved! We're saved!

(*The bagpipes swell louder. Musketry, shouts. Jessie Brown cries*): 'Tis the slogan of the McGregor, the grandest of them a'. There's help at last!

*Randall* (*Cries*): To arms, men. One charge more, and this time drive your steel down the throats of the murderous foe!

(*Bagpipes change to "Should Auld Acquaintance be Forgot." Sepoys appear at the back.*)

(*Randall and the Highlanders with their piper charge up the breastworks bearing down the Sepoys with the bayonet. The relieving forces enter. Victory. Picture.*)

Halifax being a garrison town, the excitement ran high when this military play was announced. The commander of the garrison with his staff, the officers and the soldiers and the citizens in gala attire composed a fine assembly. The play went with enthusiasm, and the great climax of the relief of the beleaguered garrison had wrought the audience up to fever heat.

My father, quite carried away with the heroism of his part and the intensity of the situation, when called upon to kill the women, cried: "Murderers! They come for their prey!" and tried to obey the stage direction of dashing down his bonnet. However, the huge structure was so firmly tied to his head that he only succeeded in pulling it over his face. He struggled madly to extricate his head. At length he emerged and cried: "Soldiers, one volley, your last, to free your countrywomen from the clutches of the demons." He let go the extinguish-

ing head-dress to make a gesture, and again it fell over his countenance. The house was in an uproar. However, the other players proceeded with the business of the scene, and the general clamor promised to cover up this accident. When my father's next cue arrived, holding up his bonnet with one hand, he waved his claymore with the other and cried: "To arms, men! One charge more and drive your steel down the throats of the murderous foe!" In his excitement, he withdrew his hands from his head-piece, and again his face disappeared from view. At the same moment the safety-pins gave way, and the huge kilt fell down to his heels. Blinded as he was by the giant of a hat, the charging Highlanders, re-enacting their actual experience with frantic enthusiasm, threw him to the ground. When he arose he was so confused that he ran in this direction and in that, tripping over his kilt, waving his claymore, struggling to get his head out of the bonnet, and crying incoherently: "Charge, men! Drive your steel down the throats of the murderous foe!"

The heroic rescue of Lucknow was, of course, turned into uproarious ridicule, and the play for that night ruined.

This was in 1859.

On August 4, 1914, the Cunard liner *Mauretania* entered Halifax harbor; war had been declared between England and Germany on August 3d. The *Mauretania* was fired on twice on the night of the 3d, and while I was on deck the vessel paused, trembled, turned at a right angle and made for Halifax. On the morning of the 4th I entered Halifax harbor for the first time. An English gunboat sped past on its way to seek battle with some German men-of-war. We cheered with beating hearts, and the least emotional of us felt the pulses beat

and the eyes grow dim. "The god of war" was abroad, we shivered beneath the shadow of his wing. I thought of Sir Houston and his fleet of over half a century ago; how he had passed over the very track this gunboat followed now; how he had said at parting, "Call me from the end of the world and I will go to you"; and I said to myself: "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy."

## XVIII

# THE COCKED HAT

During the year of 1870, a number of small robberies had occurred in the suburb of Kensington. Nearly all the houses in the vicinity had little gardens at the rear, which gave onto alleyways. Many houses had very large gardens. All of these gardens were walled in, the walls being about ten feet high. A man had frequently been seen to escape capture by leaping these walls at a bound. Report had credited this marauder with having some contrivance of steel springs attached to his feet which enabled him to make such astonishing leaps, and he had been given the name of "Spring-heel Jack." I remember very well the chills that went up and down my spine when I heard of this agile party's habits. Dick Turpin, the Newgate calendar, and the exploits of Jack Sheppard were recalled by my small acquaintances, as we kept a sharp lookout for any signs of this Jumping Jack.

About this time my father, who was a great smoker, began to notice that somebody was smoking his cigars; that, too, in a most brazen and impudent fashion, leaving the drawer of the desk open wherein they were kept, and strewing cigars about the table and even the floor. On one or two occasions the hall door leading to the garden was found open in the morning, after having been carefully locked, bolted, and barred at night. A half-finished glass of brandy and soda was discovered, one morning,

on the floor of the library; also the servants declared that they had heard some one moving about the house in the dead of night. Everybody began to feel exceedingly uncomfortable, and this discomfort was increased when our next-door neighbor, whose garden adjoined ours and who could see into our grounds from his windows, called one day to say he had seen a man moving stealthily about our lawn and among the trees the night before.

My father decided to keep watch himself. He loaded a double-barrelled shotgun and sat up in the dark. It was a wearisome business, but he kept it up for two nights. Nothing happened. The third night he slept as usual, and the perverse burglar ransacked the cigar drawer again that very evening. Not only that, but he had taken down a number of books from their shelves and had evidently sat down at my father's desk, smoking and reading. We had several dogs which were kept in the stables. Two of these, a large bulldog and a collie, were brought into the house and left at large the next evening. There was no doubt that should a strange man appear these animals would raise a rumpus. Indeed it was confidently assumed that the bulldog would deprive the culprit of some large mouthfuls of cherished portions of his anatomy. Not at all. There was not a bark, not a growl. The ghostly visitor had come and gone with impunity, and not only that, but he had actually taken the dogs out for a walk in the garden. The garden door was open again, and there on the wet pathway were the marks of the feet of dogs and man.

A kind of firecracker was made at that time for the use of children who wished to frighten their elders to death. The cracker was about the size of a small cigar; there was a string at each end of it, which could be at-

tached to either side of a doorway, say six inches from the bottom of the opening. An unsuspecting aunt or uncle or nurse or parent, passing through the doorway, would collide with this torpedo, explode it, faint or have hysterics, or otherwise exhibit an amusing spectacle of grown-up stupidity, rage, and impotence.

My father procured some of these crackers and secured them to every door in the house. It was useless. The next morning they had all been carefully untied, so that the unearthly visitant could pass through unscathed and noiseless.

The thing was becoming unbearable; people began to look pale and wan. If one spoke to a maid servant suddenly, she would scream and jump two feet in the air. We had a butler named Biggs, and a nurse named Rebecca. These two became so agitated that they got married.

"I can't be alone any more," said Rebecca.

"This is no house for a single man," said Biggs.

The Biggses left us shortly to become greengrocers. Meanwhile my father asked them to sit up and watch. They did so, but fell asleep and were found locked in the library. The double-barrelled gun which Biggs had held ready for the elusive foe had been taken from his nerveless fingers, unloaded, and placed back in its box.

"Spring-heel Jack" meanwhile had jumped over many adjacent walls, and had relieved people of many small belongings, for such agility would be hampered had he purloined grand pianos, hall clocks, or bundles of family plate. Bull's-eye lanterns were flashed in vain; a dozen people had seen him leap ten, twenty, thirty feet—very naturally the distance increased with each narrator.

Johnson, my father's coachman, suffered from tooth-

ache. One night he was devoutly wishing that he was toothless when he heard sounds in the stable below his sleeping-apartment. He arose and looked down the staircase. My father's favorite mare, "Topsy," which he never permitted any one to drive but himself, was being harnessed to the dog-cart by a man clad in a heavy ulster and wearing a cocked hat with feathers in it. Johnson's teeth chattered. He called his wife quietly. There was the man and there was the cocked hat, and there were the feathers, white and red. Johnson crept down the staircase into the dark stable, bootless and silent. He approached the man stealthily. He seized him by the neck. The stranger turned quickly and struck Johnson an awful blow between the eyes. Johnson fell heavily and his head struck the hard fire-brick floor of the coach house; he remained dead to the world. Mrs. Johnson naturally screamed. This awoke the cook who slept across the yard. The cook spread the alarm. Soon the stable-yard was filled with excited people; candles and lanterns illuminated the scene. There was "Topsy" harnessed; there was Johnson senseless and with two damaged eyes, and, best of all, there was the cocked hat! But where was the stranger? Where was "Spring-heel Jack"? For undoubtedly it was he who was about to steal the horse and trap.

My father soon appeared on the scene. Johnson was lured back to this world by the aid of cold water and doses of brandy. Held up by sympathizing fellow servants, he told his tale, corroborated by the sobbing and trembling Mrs. Johnson, "And there," said Johnson, "is the cocked hat."

"That?" said my father, taking the hat, "that is my Claude Melnotte hat! It has been taken from the cup-

board in my dressing-room! Well," said my astonished parent, "if that is not the most infernal impudence! Well, I'll be hanged!"

"And so will I!" said my mother, who stood clinging to him wide-eyed and excited.

Everybody was up all night, sleep was impossible. Next day the police were consulted; the local guardians of the peace had already failed signally to throw any light on the identity of the artful and persistent disturber of the serenity of Kensington. For the next two or three days, policemen examined the stable-yard; they examined the horse; they examined the dog-cart; they examined the bulldog and the collie dog; they examined the double-barrelled gun; they questioned everybody; we lived in a very interrogation-point. There was the cocked hat in the library on my father's desk, with its feathers, red and white. That was what puzzled the police, "why the cocked hat?" It was reasonable to suppose that a man about to steal a horse and carriage would wish to escape observation and would don a felt hat, a slouch-hat, a top-hat, a straw hat—any kind of ordinary hat—but for a thief, desirous of concealment, to deliberately select a large cocked hat, trimmed with gold braid and ornamented with red-and-white feathers, struck everybody as the height of absurdity, or the acme of courageous insolence. Really the fellow, "Spring-heel Jack," defied capture, snapped his fingers at the authorities, put his thumb to his nose as it were and twiddled his fingers at Scotland Yard, at the police force in general, at the army and the navy—even the King and Queen and the Tower of London. Jack Sheppard had reappeared among us, laughing at prison walls and treating the officers of the

law as if they were so many postage-stamps—that is, things to be placed just where one desired them to be, permanent and immovable.

"I say the thing is impossible!" cried my father, "and something has to be done."

"Leave it to me," said Uncle Hugh.

Now we all have our prejudices which lead us into error and humiliation and force us to self-abnegation and apology. My father and many another person looked upon Uncle Hugh as an amiable and eccentric idiot. So when Uncle Hugh said, "Leave it to me," my father said, "Pooh!" my mother said, "Oh tush!" and the bystanders smiled.

I, however, having braved untold hardships and dangers, and having accomplished incredible adventures under the leadership of Uncle Hugh, looked upon the matter as solved the moment that seafarer became mixed up in it.

The time for my father's tour of the English provinces was approaching; the wardrobe for his various characters had been replenished; the new things had come home. Large trunks had been brought up into the large spare bedroom. My father and mother had been busy with lists and labels, my father being a most methodical fellow; each trunk was labelled with the name of a play, as "Our American Cousin," "David Garrick," "Sam," "Dundreary Married and Settled," "The Lady of Lyons," "The Hero of Romance," "The Captain of the Watch." All of these were to be played on tour. The arrangement of all these garments—shoes, boots, lace shirts, linen shirts, cravats, gloves, wigs, hats, jewels, stockings, and a thousand and one other articles—needed a vast amount of care and precision. My father was playing

at the Haymarket Theatre in town; he came home late, and, during the exciting events here narrated, he had occupied this spare room so that he might not disturb my mother and might look over his lists in the evening. The spare room was now given to Uncle Hugh, who slept there surrounded by large trunks, as though he were admiral of a fleet, his bed the flag-ship, and the trunks a battle squadron. My father returned to his own apartment.

"Leave it to me!" said Uncle Hugh, and retired to bed, his telescope under his pillow (mere force of habit), a cutlass in one hand, and a six-shooter in the other.

At about four bells, or, as we landlubbers would say, at about three o'clock in the morning, Uncle Hugh awoke. He sat up with a start; his fair hair fairly stood up on his head; his sea-blue eyes protruded a considerable distance toward the end of his remarkably long nose. There, in the moonlight, stood a tall figure dressed in the costume of a general of the time of Napoleon—a dark-blue uniform dress coat with gilt buttons, with tricolor sash of silk around his waist, a pair of white-cloth breeches, boots to the knee with tan tops, a linen stock, his hair falling in plaits on each side of his face, and, on his head, a general's cocked hat with red and white feathers.

From mere force of habit, Hugh sought for his telescope, but this visitant from another world was clear enough to the naked eye. Hugh slid out of bed, grasping firmly his cutlass and his pistol; he steered to leeward of the foe. The figure held a pencil in his right hand and a note-book in his left; he was making notes, but was staring out of the window. He was breathing

heavily and regularly. Hugh levelled his pistol and hailed the spirit.

"Ahoy there!" said Hugh. The figure moved not. Mindful that my mother slept in the next room and fearful of frightening her, Hugh approached nearer, a little in front of the ghost.

"Ahoy there!" whispered Hugh; but the image stood still, writing, writing, writing in the book.

Hugh crept nearer, the moon shone full on the face of the slowly breathing thing. Hugh came within a foot of its countenance and peered into its eyes. It was my father. He was fast asleep.

A figure appeared at the door of the adjoining room. It was my mother. She had awakened to find my father gone. Hugh raised his arm for silence. Together they watched the strange figure. The garments for the various plays were arranged on tables and shelves about the room, ready to be placed in the trunks, each lot labelled and listed with exact care. My father always did such things himself. He now began to pack these five or six trunks; he put everything in its proper place, looking at the lists, but only looking with his mind's eye. His eyes gazed ever before him, but he would take up a list, pause, consider and proceed. He filled all the trunks, put the appropriate lists in each one, locked them up, went out of the room, down-stairs to the library, meeting the two dogs in the hall, which, of course, knew him and followed after him; opened the drawer of the desk, took out some cigars, lighted one, dropping others on the floor and on the desk. He went to the dining-room, helped himself to some brandy and opened a bottle of soda-water, cutting the string with a knife and exercised much care to avoid the cork popping and the

soda-water overflowing. He carried the drink back to the library. He sat at the desk for some time writing, without a pen in his hand and without any paper. For some five minutes my terrified mother, and the astonished Hugh watched him.

At last he got up, unlocked, unbarred, and opened the garden door; went out followed by the dogs; walked through the garden to the stable, took a private key of his own from a certain window-sill where it was kept in case Johnson should be out, entered the stable, proceeded to harness "Topsy," led that sweet mare into the coach house, put her into the dog-cart, mounted the box, and drove out into the stable-yard.

The clatter of hoofs brought Johnson and his wife to the window. He slid down the stairs and was about to yell, when Hugh stopped him with cutlass and pistol.

"It is the master!" said my mother in a dread whisper. "If you wake people who walk in their sleep it kills them."

"That!" looked Johnson. "In the cocked hat, seated there on the box of the dog-cart, in that outlandish get-up!"

My father touched "Topsy" with the whip. That playful lady stood on one leg and waved the other three joyfully in the air.

"He'll kill himself!" cried my mother.

"Open the stable door," said Hugh, bounding up into the cart beside my father.

Like a flash went "Topsy" through the gate, the tall figure of the Napoleonic wars—the Claude Melnotte of the play—swaying gayly with the swaying cart; Uncle Hugh, clad only in his nightshirt and a steamer rug and a pair of slippers. Up the high street, Kensington, and as far as the entrance to Holland Park went "Topsy." There my father awoke.

"Twelve pairs of black silk stockings, six court rapiers, six pairs of square-cut shoes with paste buckles," said my father.

"Ned!" said Uncle Hugh, "Ned, are you awake?"

"Of course I'm awake," said my father.

A policeman came up. "Wot's this 'ere?" said he. "Fifth of November? Guy Fawkes day, ain't it?"

"Policeman," said Uncle Hugh, "we have been dreaming."

"Yes," said my father, who was well aware that he sometimes had walked in his sleep, "we have been dreaming."

"We will now drive home," said Uncle Hugh.

"Get up," said my father, and touched "Topsy." That lady stood on one leg again and greeted the sunrise with a snort; then she sped away, the cocked hat and the red feather waving in the morning air.

"Dreaming?" said the policeman to the milkman, who told it to the cook, who told it to the nurse, who told it generally. "Dreaming? Dreaming? You can tell that to the marines."

"Spring-heel Jack" was actually arrested shortly after this eventful night. It transpired that he had never jumped over any wall; he had climbed walls, not to say crawled over them; he possessed little or no agility; was far from being a desperado. When he was labelled in the Rogues' Gallery the description read "Sneak-thief."

"Hugh!" said my father, "Lecoq was a fool to you. I'm sorry I said 'Pooh!'"

"Hugh certainly solved the mystery," said my mother.

"I am a sailor," said Hugh.

"I wonder what that had to do with it," said I.

# XIX

# LORD DUNDREARY

Laura Keene is reported to have had a bad temper, which took possession of her to such an extent that on one occasion she is said to have thrown goldfish about the room in her frenzy. This may or may not be so, and it is not necessary to believe a fish story. However, my father, at that time playing as Mr. Douglas Stewart, became a member of Laura Keene's company about 1857. When that tempestuous lady undertook to discipline that audacious young man, she met her Waterloo. He outmanœuvred her, outflanked her, and indeed defeated her completely. Mr. Stewart had incurred Miss Keene's displeasure at a rehearsal. She summoned him to her dressing-room, and as soon as he entered she began a violent tirade. Mr. Stewart stepped quickly to the gas-jet, which illuminated the sacred chamber, and, turning out the gas, plunged the room into darkness.

"What do you mean, sir! How dare you!" stormed the lady.

"Pardon me, Miss Keene," said that impudent Mr. Stewart, "I can't bear to see a pretty woman in a temper," and under cover of the darkness he made his exit.

It was at Laura Keene's Theatre that "Our American Cousin" was first produced. My father, having now taken his own name of Sothern, since two other Stewarts, one a manager and the other an actor in the same company, created confusion. The story of this produc-

tion has often been told, but a new light was thrown upon the history of Lord Dundreary when Joseph Jefferson related to me the following facts:

It appears that Mr. Jefferson was at the time of this production supposed to be suffering from consumption. He told me that his doctors declared that his only hope was to be out in the fresh air as much as possible. That actually his life depended upon it.

He was glad, therefore, when my father joined Laura Keene's company, to discover that he was passionately fond of riding.

They hired a stable together and purchased two horses. They shared the expense, which was a serious matter, as they were both merely stock actors. When the play of "Our American Cousin" was read to the company, as was customary, my father was so disheartened with the part for which he was cast—Lord Dundreary, a second old man with only a few lines—that he determined to throw up his engagement and leave America. He had been acting for ten years, and had, he thought, made some

LAURA KEENE'S NEW THEATRE, 624 BROADWAY.
The necessary arrangements for the production of Tom Taylor's new and original three act comedy having been completed, the management would respectfully inform the public that the first representation of
OUR AMERICAN COUSIN,
which piece has been expressly written for this theatre by one of the most popular dramatists of the period, and
NEVER BEFORE ACTED ON ANY STAGE,
will take place
MONDAY EVENING, OCT. 18, 1858,
with new scenery,
Appropriate costumes,
Properties, appointments, &c., &c.,
and a cast comprising within its limits nearly the entire
STRENGTH OF THE COMEDY COMPANY.
OUR AMERICAN COUSIN

Asa Trenchard, a live Yankee.....Mr. Jefferson
Sir Edward Trenchard, a Hampshire Baronet.....Mr. Varrey
Lord Dundreary.....Mr. Sothern
Lieut. Vernon, R. N.....Mr. Levick
Capt. de Boots.....Mr. Clinton
Coyle, attorney at law.....Mr. Burnett
Abel Murcott, his clerk.....Mr. Couldock
Binney, a butler.....Mr. Peters
Buddicombe, Lord Dundreary's man.....Mr. McDonall
Rasper, a groom.....Mr. Wharton
John Whicker, an under gardener.....Mr. B. Brown
Florence Trenchard.....Miss Laura Keene
Mrs. Mountchessington.....Miss Mary Wells
Augusta, Georgina } her daughters .....Miss Effie Germon, Mrs. Sothern
Mary Meredith.....Miss Sara Stevens
Sharpe, Miss Trenchard's maid.....Miss Flynn
Skillet, Mrs. Mountchessington's maid.....Mrs. Levick

SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY AND INCIDENTS.
ACT I.

SCENE I.—Morning Room at Trenchard Manor.....Almy.
Servants' gossip. An itinerant post office much more expeditious than the official slow coach. An unknown locality. Where is Brattleboro, Vermont? Florence. A trans-Atlantic letter. A dead branch of the genealogical tree resuscitated. An interesting invalid. An unexpected arrival. Our American cousin. Cousinly affection checked. An unsatisfactory luncheon. No chowder. No slapjacks. No Nothing. An American drink. Brandy smashes and chain lightning.
SCENE II.—Room in Trenchard Manor.....Thorne.
A model lawyer and a drunken clerk. Debt, the nemesis. A financial panic. An old mortgage, but no release. Fraud in perspective. A terrible price. A daughter's happiness for a father's safety. A female Robin Hood. Hopeless inebriety. A noble resolution.

FACSIMILE OF PART OF ADVERTISEMENT IN NEW YORK *HERALD*, OCTOBER 18, 1858, ANNOUNCING THE FIRST PRODUCTION OF "OUR AMERICAN COUSIN"

NEW YORK, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1858.

# LAURA KEENE'S THEATRE

**624 Broadway, between Houston and Bleecker street.**

MISS LAURA KEENE.....SOLE LESSEE AND DIRECTRESS
MR. THOMAS BAKER.....MUSICAL DIRECTOR
MR. J. G. BURNETT.....STAGE MANAGER

Doors open at a quarter before Seven o'clock. To commence at half past seven precisely.

## MONDAY EVENING, NOV. 22nd, 1858,

**AND EVERY NIGHT UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.**

With a cast comprising within its Range nearly the entire

## Strength of the Comedy Company,

# OUR AMERICAN COUSIN

Asa Trenchard, a Yankee.....Mr Jefferson
Sir Edward Trenchard, Bart.....Mr Varrey
Lord Dundreary.....Mr Sothern
Lieut. Vernon, R.N.....Mr Levick
Capt. De Boots.....Mr Clinton
Coyle, Attorney at Law.....Mr Burnett
Abel Murcott, Esq.....Mr Conklock
Binney, a Waiter.....Mr Peters
Buddicombe, Lord Dundreary's valet.....Mr McDonall
Reeper, a groom.....Mr Wharton
John Whicken, an under gardener.....Mr B. Brown
Florence Trenchard.....Miss Laura Keene
Mrs Mountchessington.....Miss Mary Wells
Augusta, Georgina, Mary Meredith, Sharpe, Miss Trenchard's maid, Skillet, Mrs Mountchessington's maid (her daughters).....Miss Effie Germon, Mrs Sothern, Miss Sara Stevens, Miss Flynn, Mrs Levick

## THE ORCHESTRA,

Whose performances constitute a brilliant feature in each entertainment, is composed chiefly of SOLO PERFORMERS, under the direction of the celebrated Composer and *chef D'Orchestre*,

**MR. THOMAS BAKER.**

To conclude with the favorite Farce, the

# Dumb Belle

Mr Manvers.....Mr McDonall
O'Smirk.....Mr Peters
Vivian.....Mr Levick
James.....Mr Brown
Eliza.....Miss McCarthy

With Songs, "Gentle Annie," "We may be Happy yet."

Mary.....Miss Flynn

## NOTICE.

In the fulfilment of her managerial policy, which forbids the production of any new theatrical entertainment, Miss Keene begs to announce, as a forward state of preparation, after many months spent in elaborate rehearsal, the

## A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Which for poetic imagery has no parallel in the whole range of Dramatic literature. It will be produced in that **highest style of art** for which the establishment has ever been celebrated, combining the **elegant designs** of **Gorgeous New Scenery, Costumes and Appointments**, after the best classical authorities. **New Fairy Transformations** of a bewildering character, and **The Whole of Mendelssohn's Exquisite Music** by a large Orchestra and CHORUS, under the direction of Mr. THOMAS BAKER, whose recent successful arrangements of music from the European and American operas, will contribute to the illustrated JUVENILE to render complete that **Combination** of **the Sommernachtstraum** will ever remain a musical treat of no ordinary character. For further particulars see future announcements.

In rehearsal, Sperry's celebrated American Comedy of

## EXTREMES,

In which MR. BLAKE will sustain his original character of MARK MAYBERRY, supported by the strength of the company.

Balcony Chairs can be secured one week in advance without extra charge.

Promoter.....Mr S. Carpenter
Treasurer.....Mr C. Young

*Reproduced by courtesy of John F. Hinchman*

PROGRAMME LAURA KEENE'S THEATRE, NOVEMBER 22, 1858

impression, and he felt that if his years of labor had brought him no further reward, he would give up the struggle. He told Jefferson that he proposed to return to England and enter his father's office in Liverpool, to devote himself to mercantile pursuits. At once it occurred to Mr. Jefferson that if my father went away he would have to abandon the stable; he could not bear the expense alone. He used all his powers of argument to induce my father not to throw up his part. Joe Jefferson was the leading comedian of the company, and he promised my father that with Miss Keene's consent, he would permit him any liberty in the scenes they might have together.

"But I have no scenes," said my father; "I have only about ten lines."

"We will have scenes," said Jefferson; "we will make them."

He persuaded the dejected Mr. Sothern to at least attend the first few rehearsals, and he did so. Jefferson was as good as his word, of course, and Miss Keene was induced to allow Lord Dundreary much liberty. My mother played Georgina, the part opposite my father, and she and he worked up many lines and replies at home, and were allowed to introduce them into the play. If you have ever seen this comedy you may have remarked that nearly all of Dundreary's scenes are with Asa Trenchard or Georgina. Jefferson worked hard to help his fellow horseman, and day by day Dundreary was, as it were, superimposed upon the play. The success of the character was not so great at first, but it grew as the actor felt his way. The printed play as sold by French & Son represents the result of the first two seasons or so of performances. Every season that my father played the

piece it was altered and added to; his work on it was constant and unremitting. Many actors played the part, indeed it was commonly played by the stock companies of the day, but my father always kept ahead with fresh ideas. The play was gradually simplified from a drama of three acts of four scenes each to a play of four acts of one scene each, the first and last scene being the same. My father each year copied out his own prompt-books, or had them copied, and then wrote in his most recent additions. I have many such prompt-books, with most minute notes and directions. When I played the play, nearly thirty years after his death, these manuscripts were so perfect that I had no difficulty in recalling every movement of all the characters. My father's genius was indeed the genius of infinite pains. I have heard him relate that the little skip he used in his gait in Dundreary originated simply from his habit of trying to keep in step with my mother as they walked up and down at the back of the stage arranging their lines. The skip and the stutter and other business grew and grew from performance to performance. As Jefferson says in his "Life," the character of Dundreary gradually pushed all the other characters out of the play.

Another unpublished incident of the history of this comedy came to me by accident, when one evening, while I was playing the piece in America, my manager told me that an old Englishman who kept the gallery door wished to see me. I asked him to come behind the scenes. He had, he said, occupied a position in the great dry-goods store of Marshall & Snellgrove in London at the time of the first production of "Our American Cousin," at the Haymarket Theatre. Mr. Buckstone was the manager of the Haymarket. It was his habit when business was

*From a photograph by C. D. Fredericks & Co. in the collection of Robert Coster*

E. A. SOTHERN AS LORD DUNDREARY, 1858

bad to distribute a number of free seats among the employees of this establishment. One day Mr. Buckstone called and said: "This new play, 'Our American Cousin,' is an absolute failure. The house is empty, and I want to make an effort to fill it on Saturday night. I think this new man, Sothern, is very funny, and if he can get a house, I believe he will succeed." A great number of seats were given out, but curiously on that Saturday the fact that Lord Dundreary was an amusing personage had attracted a number of people to the pit. It was the pit that Mr. Buckstone especially desired to fill, for the pit to "rise at one," was then, as now, extremely desirable. Together with free tickets and those who wished to pay, there was such a crush at the pit entrance that a woman was thrown down and trampled to death in a panic which ensued. On Monday the papers were full of this accident. Correspondence ensued, much advertising was the result, and, said my new friend, "the success of the play was assured from that moment." To what untoward circumstance may we not owe our success or failure! That poor woman's death may have actually turned the fortune of the play, for if it had not drawn on the next Monday, it was Mr. Buckstone's intention to take it off. The play ran for four hundred and ninety-six nights at the Haymarket and made the fortune of Mr. Buckstone and of my father.

Two curious circumstances happened during this English engagement. One night, after "Dundreary" had been triumphant for about a year, and my father felt more than assured of his great success, a weary swell in the first row of the stalls arose about the middle of the second act, deliberately put on his coat, stretched himself, yawned audibly, while people mur-

mured "Hush!" "Sit down!" etc., and started unperturbed up the aisle. My father, greatly nettled but feeling sure of sympathy from the disturbed spectators, went down to the footlights and said: "I beg your pardon, my dear sir, but there are two more acts after this."

"I know," said the weary one, "that's why I'm going."

It is dangerous to step out of one's part. An old friend of my father, one Doctor Simpson, induced him to go out of town to play one matinée performance of "Dundreary." My father, feeling that he was conferring rather a favor on the small community, went with his company. This Simpson was a great joker, and went about telling the rustic auditors that this man Sothern, being an eminent London actor, they must be careful about their demeanor in the theatre. "This is no cheap kind of play," said he. "You must not let this man think we have no manners. Don't applaud, don't laugh; it isn't done, people of taste don't do it. Laugh when you get home, but remember, 'the loud laugh denotes the vacant mind.' If you like this man's acting, say so quietly when you meet him at the reception after the play."

Never was there such a night. The house crowded to the doors and not a sound of welcome, not a sound of laughter at this most comic of characters. For two acts my distracted father endured torture, the fiendish Simpson running around to him every now and again, hitting him on the back and whispering vehemently: "Isn't it great! I never saw such enthusiasm! They're simply mad about it!"

"The devil they are!" said my wretched father. "They are as dumb as oysters."

*From a photograph by Sarony*

EDWARD A. SOTHERN AS LORD DUNDREARY IN "OUR AMERICAN COUSIN"

It came to the third act where there is a long and most arduous monologue of nearly half an hour. Not a sound. My father could endure no more. He arose from the stool whereon he sat, walked down to the footlights and said: "Ladies and gentlemen, if you don't laugh I can't go on." Pandemonium broke loose. People shouted and wept. My father for once was nonplussed, but he caught sight of Simpson in a box self-possessed and smileless, and a light broke in upon his darkness.

I have been nursed on more knees than any other baby in America. While the men and women of my father's generation were yet alive, I would constantly meet elderly people, males and females, who would exclaim: "Why, I nursed you on my knee when you were a baby!" Old Couldock, Mrs. Walcot, Joe Jefferson, Stoddart, William Warren, Mrs. Vincent—I could name a thousand in public and private life whose knees had accommodated me. From knee to knee I would seem to have hopped as birds from bough to bough. I must have reposed upon as many bosoms as did Queen Elizabeth on four-post beds. Whether I was nursed thus because I was either beautiful or good, or because the last good Samaritan desired to hand me on rapidly to the next, history sayeth not. Perchance my mother, in her busy life at that time, had constantly to say to the bystanders, "Here! hold the baby!" while she ran to take up her cue at rehearsal; the infant would have to be controlled by an alien hand, while "Ride a cockhorse," and "Pat-a-cake, baker's man" may have been sung in my ear by many an unwilling nurse.

It is not always that one may excite admiration concerning one's personal charms before one has entered

upon this stage of fools. Such, however, was my good fortune. I have a letter, written by my father from New Orleans, to his sister in England; it says:

Lytton is the most strictly beautiful child you ever saw. Fan [my mother] is looking over my shoulder as I write and says: "Of course the baby will be the same."

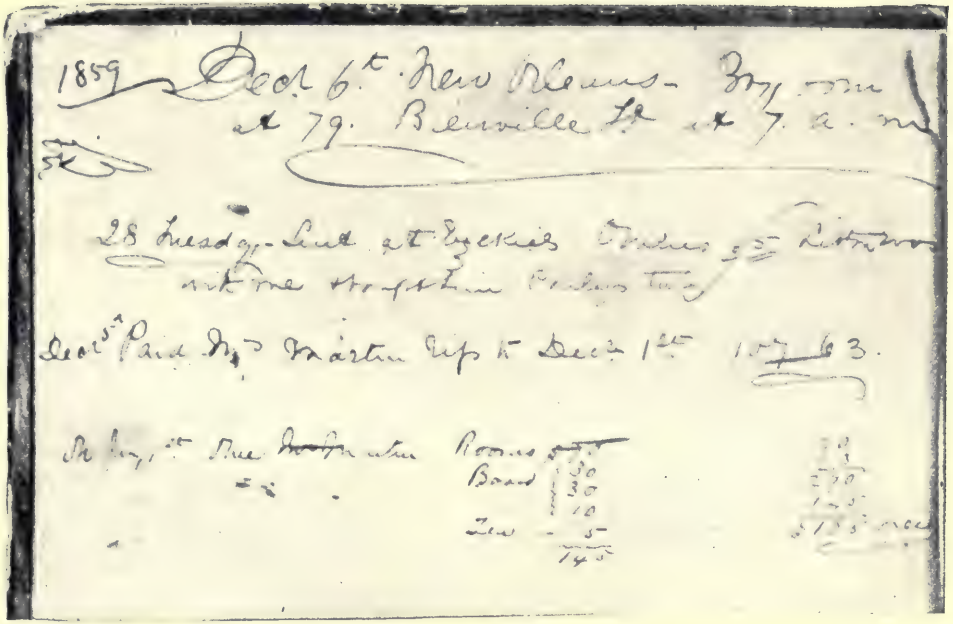
The baby was myself. On December 6, 1859, at 79 Bienville Street, New Orleans, the baby appeared. My father, careful to remember unimportant details, made a memorandum in a scrap-book of theatrical notices; among other notes, such as the sum due his landlady, and the number and variety of articles of clothing in the wash, he had jotted down: "December 6, 1859, 4 A. M., 79 Bienville Street, New Orleans, boy born."

One is apt to forget a thing like that; a baby may readily be mislaid, and it is always wise to make notes. While the event was still fresh in his memory, the delighted parent wrote with enthusiasm to his friend Cone, the father of Kate Claxton, whose brother gave me the letter:

DEAR CONE:

The long expected youth has at last arrived. The very first thing he did was to sneeze, so the least we can do is to call him Dundreary Sothern.

At the time of my birth my father was a member of a stock company in New Orleans. It was shortly after the successful production of "Our American Cousin" at Laura Keene's Theatre in New York. This present enterprise was my father's venture, and the theatre was called for the occasion "Sothern's Varieties." Here a



FACSIMILE OF PART OF A PAGE IN E. A. SOTHERN'S SCRAP-BOOK NOTING THE BIRTH OF HIS SON, EDWARD H. SOTHERN

large and varied repertoire was played, my mother doing her share of this work and even adapting a drama from the French, called in English "Suspense," which was a great success. Lawrence Barrett and John T. Raymond were members of the organization.

I left New Orleans as a baby, and did not return until I was nineteen and a member of John McCullough's company. I sought out my birthplace, and discovered it with some difficulty, for the numbers of the houses had been changed; but at last I found the spot, a strange, foreign-seeming building constructed about a court-yard which was surrounded by galleries like an ancient English inn. The place was still a lodging-house; indeed the woman who had kept it during my father's time was not long dead. I was able from description often repeated to locate the very rooms my father and mother occupied, and the room wherein I first made my entrance. The old Saint Charles Hotel was then in existence—the building of the war-times. I hied me with much interest to the barroom, for there was the scene of a tragedy whereof I had heard my father speak. In that large and rather gloomy hall, supported by columns, had been fought a duel between an actor named Harry Copeland and one Overall, a newspaper man. My father was present at this conflict—and barely saved his life by jumping behind one of these same columns.

While I was in New Orleans on this visit, an old lady gave me a small fawn-colored coat, very old-fashioned, with high collar, bell-shaped cuffs, pearl buttons as large as a half-dollar, much moth-eaten. On the small strap by which coats are hung was the name of Dion Boucicault. When "Our American Cousin" was first produced in New York, Boucicault had lent my father

this coat to wear in his part; my father had given it to the husband of this woman as a keepsake, and here it was back again with me. When I reached home I looked into the ancient pockets and behold! there was a paper and written in my father's hand, some memoranda:

Get "Peter Parley's Tales" for Lytton.
Lent So-and-so twenty-five dollars; this makes forty-five he owes me.
Fan's birthday.
Have part copied.
Pad for Kinchin and prompt-book of "Flowers of the Forest."
Write to Polly (his sister).
Name of baby—Hugh—Edward—John—Edwin—Francis—Askew—also shoes.
Hair-cut.

Here certain sums in arithmetic, evidently profits and losses.

Then comes the startling announcement:

To-day the baby distinctly said "DASH IT!"

This epoch-making remark of mine has escaped the eye of contemporaneous historians. It may appear a matter of no moment to the unobservant for one small babe to say "Dash it!" One's first observation does not carry the same significance as one's last. Whether "Dash it!" was a reminiscence or a criticism or an expletive, whether spoken in the spirit of inquiry, rebuke, comment, contrition, or abuse, joy or grief or pleasure or regret, may not be known. That it was a statement worthy of record is established beyond a doubt. At

E. A. SOTHERN AS THE KINCHIN IN "THE FLOWERS OF THE FOREST"

that time it was an utterance of some consequence; the fate of nurseries depended on it. Evidently it was an event expected and prepared for. Had it not been for the accident of my meeting with the old lady who gave me the coat, this oration might never have been chronicled, and the first address of a distinguished citizen to his native city would have been buried in oblivion. Whether I was "dashing" the world, or the nurse, or life, or things in general, is not set down; that I even meant what I said is not now to be established. That I "dashed" something was evident. The dashed thing that was dashed must forever remain a mystery.

## XX

# ALL MIRTH AND NO MATTER

The difference between wit and humor has often been debated.

"This fellow's wise enough to play the fool, and to do that well craves a kind of wit."

Here wit and wisdom are synonymous.

Says the Oxford dictionary of wit: "Intelligence, understanding, power of giving sudden intellectual pleasure by unexpected combining or contrasting of previously unconnected ideas or expressions." Of humor: "State of mind, mood, jocose imagination, less intellectual and more sympathetic than wit."

The practical joker comes under the category of wit, I fancy; yet there are practical jokes and practical jokes. It may be a practical joke to crush an old gentleman's hat over his eyes, but such an attack, though it may cause laughter, is hardly an exhibition of intelligence or understanding, nor can the pleasure excited in the onlooker be classed as intellectual. But a carefully prepared and elaborate series of events leading up to a comic predicament, such as my father perpetrated when Bryant's minstrel men impersonated the élite of New York, and by a "shoot-up" at a dinner-party drove an ingenuous Englishman to seek refuge under the table—here one may beg to class ideas in action with wit. "The clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled o' the sere," says Hamlet. This result may readily be achieved

by blows from the bawble with the bladder usually attached thereto. The wit proceeds by finer methods; imagination, premeditation, and a distinct intellectual quality distinguish his inventions. I think, therefore, that my father's practical jokes—for which, in his day, he was more or less famous—proceeded from his wit.

The macaroni of Sheridan's time, who upset the watchmen and buried them in their sentry-like boxes, who wrenched the knockers off doorways in the middle of the night, and ran their rapiers through peaceful pedestrians, were hardly witty. But Sheridan was a wit.

When his creditor, the livery-stable keeper, called in his carriage to collect his heavy account, Sheridan, entertaining him with wine and wit, not only persuaded him to forego payment, but borrowed a heavy sum from him, and then, having excused himself, drove away in the liveryman's carriage. When the liveryman, weary of waiting for his host's return, was told Mr. Sheridan had taken his vehicle, he cried: "Gone in my carriage!"

To which the servant replied: "Mr. Sheridan never walks!"

When the town heard this, the adventure was hailed as the exploit of wit. But there may have been something of cruelty in it, since one speaks of the "victim" of a wit; while humor, depending more upon the grotesque and unexpected in the demeanor and utterance of the humorist, is perhaps devoid of that quality.

The practical joke certainly presupposes a victim; somebody has to be put in a foolish and laughable situation. Even a community may be made to look ridiculous. This occurred when my father, playing under the name of Mr. Douglas Stewart, then a member of Laura Keene's company in New York, put an advertisement in the paper

and distributed hand-bills to the effect that Professor Cantellabiglie (can tell a big lie) would fly from the top of Trinity steeple at noon on a certain day in the year 1859. At the appointed hour the crush was so great that traffic was utterly disorganized; a riot seemed imminent. A free fight for coigns of vantage took place in many localities. The police had the greatest difficulty in handling the huge crowds. At last some one while contemplating the name of the new Icarus discovered the joke.

"Can tell a big lie!" he shouted. "It's a hoax!"

A roar of rage, another of laughter succeeded. Then the town laughed at the town, and each man at his neighbor. The joker was not discovered for some days. When Mr. Douglas Stewart announced himself as the perpetrator of the joke, it was admitted that he had done well.

I have met men in this year of 1914 who are still laughing at Cantellabiglie. Any man who can provide such perennial amusement is a public benefactor.

When I was at school in London in 1875, my pastors and masters, like most other Englishmen, were persuaded that one shot buffalo in Central Park, and that red Indians perambulated on Fifth Avenue, exchanging skins for beads, and occasionally shooting with poisoned arrows at offending citizens. One's scalp was supposed to be somewhat unsafe, and to breakfast without one's six-shooter by one's plate and one's bowie-knife in one's boot was to be branded as a reckless fellow. Mr. Phillip Lee, the husband of Miss Adelaide Neilson, was of these opinions. My father took pains to cultivate such views, and on his arrival in New York met Mr. Lee at the dock with a brass band, conducted him to the Gramercy Park

*From a photograph by Sarony*

EDWARD A. SOTHERN ABOUT 1875

Hotel, discussed the buffalo hunt for the following day, which was to be accompanied by a band of Sioux Indians, and left his guest to dress himself for a great banquet which was to be given in his honor that same evening. To this occasion had been invited the most eminent men of the United States—a great number of judges, colonels, major-generals, doctors, senators, professors, and so on. Mr. Lee, being a distinguished foreigner, was to be greeted by the élite of New York.

As a matter of fact, my father had conspired with his friend, Dan Bryant, the celebrated minstrel man, who arrived at the appointed hour, accompanied by about thirty of his comedians, attired in more or less aristocratic if somewhat outré costume. My father had prepared Lee for the primitive manners of the uncouth American; but he was somewhat taken aback at a certain freedom of expression, and became ill at ease when each guest, as he took his place at the dinner-table, placed a six-shooter of great size by his plate.

"It is nothing," whispered my father to his guest of honor; "merely custom; very touchy, these people; great sense of honor; let us hope there will be no bloodshed."

This humane desire was dashed, however, when, grace having been said, Dan Bryant drank his soup from the plate and demanded a second helping. A guest on the opposite side of the table laughed. Mr. Bryant requested to know what caused the amusement of his honorable friend, Judge Morton. A short colloquy followed which culminated in the Honorable Mr. Bryant shooting across the table at the Honorable Mr. Morton, and that agile gentleman jumping on to the table, bowie-knife in hand, loudly avowing his intention of cutting the heart out of the Honorable Mr. Bryant.

Friends adjusted this initial difficulty; explanations were in order, hands were shaken, drinks were taken, apologies to the guest of the evening were made, and the fish was served. Some one made a remark about some one else being "a queer fish."

"A reflection on our host!" cried a major-general, "the fish is first rate!"

"You lie!" remarked a distinguished senator.

Panic ensued. A fight with bowie-knives at once took everybody from the table. Up and down the room struggled the combatants; now the knives were in the air, visible above the heads of the crowd; now they were apparently plunged into the bodies of the honorable major-general and the honorable senator. Shrieks, curses, demands for fair play shook the chandeliers. At last the honorable senator was slain; his body was taken into the adjoining room, the door closed, the banquet resumed.

Lee was in a highly excited state and suggested the police.

"No, no!" said several honorable gentlemen, senators, judges, and professors, "we always settle these matters among ourselves. The coroner is a friend of ours; he invariably attends after any important gathering."

The dinner proceeded. Speeches of welcome to Mr. Lee, the distinguished guest, were in order. Replies by my father and Lee were offered amidst great applause and laughter. Lee especially was acclaimed; every word he said was the signal for shouts of appreciation. The conspirators were waiting for a cue to cap the excitement of the night. Lee provided it when he said, with a desire to conciliate everybody and appease the warring factions: "I was born in England, my mother was Irish and my father was Scotch. As an Englishman,

I salute you! as a Scotchman, I greet you! as an Irishman, I cry, 'Erin go bragh!' "

"He means me!" cried a senator, bringing a bowie-knife from the back of his neck. Like a flash a bullet from a doctor of divinity laid him low. A dozen shots rang out. Some one gave a signal, and the lights were extinguished. A general battle ensued amid such a turmoil that chaos seemed come again; the table-cloth was pulled from the table with a crash of glass and crockery. A great banging at doors added to the din. Cries of "Murder!" "Kill him!" "Knife him!" rent the air.

When the gas was lit at last and silence was restored, the floor was strewn with victims. Lee was nowhere to be seen. Search revealed him hiding under the table, his teeth chattering, his hair on end, and terror in his eye. He was extricated. The dead men arose and hoped he had not been disturbed by the slight misunderstanding. Law and order was restored, and, amid much good feeling, the buffalo hunt was arranged for the following morning.

The practical joker's day is past. He began to fade with the doings of Theodore Hook; my father was about the last of his race, as Count D'Orsay was the last of the dandies. Times are changed, but there are men alive still who remember Cantellabiglie and the dinner to Phil Lee, and who yet laugh as they remember. Many and many a man has introduced himself to me and shown me kindness in recollection of these adventures, which surely left a gentle thought of their perpetrator.

When I was once very much in need in New York, a man who had been one of the victims of the Cantellabiglie hoax insisted that I should live on credit in his

boarding-house and that I should not worry about my bill at his restaurant. More than that, seeing that ready cash was a scarce commodity with me, he one day thrust some bills into my hand for my father's sake. "He used to make me laugh," said he, and tears were in his eyes.

Once when I was on tour in a one-night stand, some of my company and I sought supper after the play was over. No restaurant was open, but a friendly policeman assured us that if he could induce a certain German grocer to open his store we might get some bread and cheese and sardines. The prospect was delicious to hungry wayfarers. We knocked at the grocer's door. Shortly, a head appeared at the window. The owner of the head at first refused to accommodate us, but promises of gold melted his resolve, and shortly a very ill-tempered German let us in. He lighted a lamp and, seated on kegs and a bench, we began to munch our cheese and crackers and to drink cider. One of my company, Herbert Archer, addressed me by name.

"What's that you say?" said the grocer, pausing in the act of opening sardines. "What name was that?"

"Sothern," said I, "my name."

"What Sothern?" said the cheesemonger, "not Sothern the actor?"

"Yes," said I.

He put down his sardines with deliberation, came over to me and placed a hand on each shoulder.

"Your father?" said he.

"Yes," said I.

"Are you the son of old Dundreary Sothern?" said the grocerman.

"Yes," said I.

*From the collection of Robert Coster, Esq.*

LAURA KEENE AS FLORENCE TRENCHARD

"My dear!" cried the affectionate Teuton, and threw his arms about me. He called lustily to his wife: "Gretchen," he cried, "come here!"

A big woman appeared, angry at being waked up at an unholy hour.

"Come here!" cried her lord. "This is the son of old Dundreary Sothern! You recall? When we was young peoples: 'Birds of a feather gather no moss' — remember?"

The big woman burst into loud laughter. "'No bird would be such a damned fool as to go into a corner and flock by himself,'" said she, and they both shook with laughter. We all laughed. What a change was there! She rummaged her kitchen; she cooked things; her husband laid a table. He produced bacon, eggs, sausages, fruit, wine, beer, cigars. For us, had come across the seas produce from foreign lands; for us, China, Japan, the Indies, East and West, had sent forth their argosies; his shop was ours.

Now there are, no doubt, a thousand grocers who have the same loving remembrance, and, since grocers are not the only theatregoers, nor do members of that calling survive to the extinction of tallow-chandlers, butchers, and bakers, and tinkers, and tailors, this incident persuades me that a large part of the community recalls the services of Dundreary Sothern with the same kindliness; for it was out of the fulness of his heart that this cheesemonger embraced me and, although he was unshaved and redolent of lamp-oil, cheese, sardines, externally, and of onions, tobacco, and beer internally, my soul responded to his hugs, and I thought to myself that the memories awakened in his large bosom and the no less extensive breast of his spouse by the mention of

my father's name were not unworthy, and that there was much of the sunlight and the joy of running waters in the heart of the man who had inspired them.

It is something in a work-a-day world to make laughter re-echo through the years. "This is a practise as full of labor as a wise man's art."

# XXI

# NO SONG, NO SUPPER

I HAVE always envied those people who have the courage and the ability to recite. I never could bring myself to do it. The immediate contact with an audience disconcerts me. When the handsome leading man has walked on at a benefit, and has held forth with the "Charge of the Light Brigade," it has looked so easy and has been so victorious that I have hated myself for not being able to do likewise. However, I can't, so there's an end. The deficiency is inherited. My father never could or would recite; he had a sort of constitutional aversion to doing so. Perhaps he fancied people looked funny when reciting; he certainly took a fiendish pleasure in disconcerting reciters. I remember once attending a benefit performance with him and Edwin Adams when John McCullough was to recite. He was billed to declaim a favorite poem of his, "Flynn of Virginia." They say he was quite wonderful at it. On this occasion, my father and Adams selected seats in the middle of the front row of the orchestra, and quite upset the proceedings. The recitation begins with the words, "You knew Flynn, Flynn of Virginia?"

Mr. McCullough came on and was greeted with great applause. He made an impressive pause and began: "You knew Flynn, Flynn of Virginia?"

Ned Adams and my father stood up and, looking steadily at McCullough, solemnly shook their heads, as who should say, "No, we never heard of him"; then they solemnly sat down again.

McCullough was disconcerted but went to it again. "You knew Flynn, Flynn of Virginia?" said he. Again the two solemn figures arose, shook their heads sadly and reseated themselves. This occurred three or four times, each time McCullough finding it more impossible to control his laughter, until at last he could do so no longer, and went off the stage hysterical.

While my father was playing Tom Robertson's comedy of "David Garrick" in London during his first great success in England, he made an engagement that when his tour should open at a certain provincial town he would attend a supper to be given by a militia regiment. The occasion arrived, and the supper was a most elaborate affair. The colonel of the regiment was a man my father knew quite well in London. The dinner was good, the fun fast and furious, and when the feast was over stories and recitations were in order. Local talent distinguished itself. Great was the applause and enthusiasm, and as the night wore on the heavily laden table, on which shone the regimental glass and silver, rattled again and again with the appreciation of the crowd. At last my father was called upon for a recitation. He protested that he never had been able to recite; explained his actual inability to do so, that he never had done such a thing, and knew nothing to recite. No one seemed to believe him. Shouts of "Oh, you must!" "Come on, now!" and much uproar and persistence ensued. Again and again my father declared he would if he could, but that he was utterly unable to oblige his hosts. He professed his sincere wish to do anything to add to the entertainment of the night, but regretted that he had this peculiar incapacity. Men gradually became emphatic, and more or less ungracious remarks could be heard among the

*From a photograph by Sarony in the collection of Evert Jansen Wendell, Esq.*

EDWARD A. SOTHERN AS DAVID GARRICK

din, some unruly spirits rather rudely declaring their resentment and disgust. The situation became quite embarrassing and distasteful. At last a climax was reached when one man, more flushed and uproarious than the rest, cried out: "Oh, come, I say, you must pay for your supper!"

My father got up with sudden resolve. Said he: "All right, I'll pay."

Much acclaim followed, although the colonel and some others seemed to deprecate the general attitude.

Said my father: "I'll pay for my supper, but," he continued, "I can't recite in the usual way; all I can do is to give a scene from one of my plays."

"Good!" "That'll do!" "First-rate!" sang out the voices.

"I'll give you the drunken scene in 'David Garrick,'" said my father; "but I must tell you that I can't be responsible when I am acting; I get carried away completely and anything may happen. You may remember," he went on, "that Garrick comes to the house of a common, ill-bred, vulgar city man, where he meets a crowd of common, ill-bred, vulgar guests; they cry out to him to act, and he does act, indeed, but not as they anticipate. He pretends to be drunk in order to disgust the heroine, who has fallen in love with his playing. He does disgust her. She is broken-hearted to think that this drunken fellow is the man who has enchanted her with his performance of Hamlet, and Lear, and Macbeth. He is broken-hearted that he has had to do what he has done—shatter her idol, himself. He is about to leave the room when the common, ill-bred, vulgar crowd cry: 'Turn him out!' 'Kick him out!' Then he turns on them in fury like this, as I do now," and my father turned, as indeed he

does in the play, and the lines of Coriolanus which Garrick speaks in the scene came from his lips red-hot. Cried he:

> You common cry of curs! whose breath I hate
> As reek of the rotten fens, whose loves I prize
> As the dead carcasses of unburied men
> That do corrupt my air! I banish you!
> And here remain with your uncertainty!
> Let every feeble rumor shake your hearts!
> Your enemies with nodding of their plumes
> Fan you into despair! . . . . . .
> Despising,
> For you, the city. Thus I turn my back,
> There is a world elsewhere.

Here the business of the play is that Garrick seizes the curtains of the opening in the centre of the stage, tears them down in his frenzy, and wraps them around him as he rushes out.

When my father had delivered the speech with great force, he seized the corner of the table-cloth and wrapped it about his body as he twisted round and round on his way to the door. Crash came all the plate and glass and silver from the table. All the men jumped to their feet, as with his final words my father rushed from the room.

There was a pause, breathless; then he returned. "Dear me!" said he, "what a mess! I fear I was carried away. I was afraid it would be so, but one must pay for one's supper."

It is needless to say that this incident was not acclaimed with transports of delight. Never had that scene been played to so unresponsive an audience.

The colonel conducted my father to his carriage and assured him that he had taught the younger men a lesson

they were not likely to forget. Subsequently this same colonel, and indeed many of the others present, became my father's fast friends. The matter, however, was made public, and my father was not asked to recite again.

To recite requires a peculiar kind of audacity. A great many persons possess this temerity who are quite incapable of acting in the sense of impersonating. The ability to read is different and apart from the quality necessary for acting. I have seen excellent readers fail utterly as actors; equally there are good actors who do not read well. The reciters are usually rather severe critics of acting, and know just how the job ought to be done.

My father was a most generous and kindly critic, who would take infinite pains to assist and instruct beginners. In my own case, however, he began by being most severe. It was in this same play of "David Garrick" that I had my first lesson in acting with him. I had to impersonate the servant who announces the guests at the house of Simon Ingot, the old merchant. I had to precede each guest on to the stage, stand in the centre of the doors at the back, and cry in a loud voice: "Mr. and Mrs. Smith." "Mr. Jones." "Miss Araminta Brown," and so on. At the first rehearsal I said: "Mr. and Mrs. Smith" in a bashful and very self-conscious manner. My father told me to speak louder. I tried again, but was more nervous and conscious than before.

"It won't do at all," said my father, who had done his utmost to dissuade me from entering on the career of acting. "I will go to the back of the auditorium and you must shout it at me like this," and he showed me how the announcement should be delivered. By this time all the company were observing me with looks of mingled pity and contempt, I thought. I tried several times to

cry "Mr. and Mrs. Smith," knowing quite well that it was all wrong, and quite annihilated to discover that so simple a duty was fraught with so much danger and difficulty. My father, distinctly impatient now, called loud directions from the back of the theatre. But it was useless, I became worse and worse. Then he came forward to the centre of the house and said: "It's no use; you'd better give up the stage."

As I had not yet entered upon my coveted career, this advice seemed premature, and for that day I retired crestfallen and defeated. Shortly, while I was contemplating suicide in the dressing-room next to my father's, I heard him discussing the incident with his manager, Horace Wall. "No," said Wall, "he won't do. Eddy has not the mouth for an orator."

I looked in the looking-glass at my mouth. It did seem rather weak and small, and I wondered if it could be altered, as I understood from advertisements that they altered people's noses. But these reflections brought neither comfort nor encouragement. However I labored over the announcements, and was heard when the time came to speak them.

Long afterward in Greenock, a seaport in Scotland, I was to portray Squire Chivey in this same comedy when my brother Lytton played David Garrick. I went into a barber's shop to get my hair cut. In the next chair to me was a seafaring man who resembled a pirate from the Spanish Main. He had the olive complexion of the story-books, earrings in his ears, a reckless air, and one suspected stilettos and pistols all over him. He addressed me and a conversation ensued. He announced his intention of visiting the theatre, and I incautiously mentioned that I was acting in the play.

"Ha, ha!" cried the pirate. "What do you play?" I told him. "I will be there," said he, "and cry 'Bravo! Bravissimo!'"

He departed and I shortly forgot his existence. When I came on at night, however, I beheld the sea-rover rise in his place and bring his great hands together like claps of thunder. "Bravo! Bravissimo!" yelled he. Neither my position nor my part demanded enthusiasm, and there was a general "Hush!" "Sit down!" "Turn him out!" from the audience.

"Bravo! Bravissimo!" howled my friend of the barbershop.

"Shut up!" came from the gallery.

Two ushers approached and whispered counsel into the earringed ears.

"Abaft there!" cried the pirate. "Bravo! Bravissimo!"

Our manager intervened. Many men arose, a general murmur of "Drunk!" "Kick him out!" "Turn him out!" came from all parts of the house. A policeman floated down the aisle and seized my admirer. A free fight ensued, all the arts of marine warfare came into play against these land forces. Twenty men joined in the fray.

"Bravo! Bravissimo!" yelled my friend as he emerged victorious for a moment, only to be submerged again. Conquered, overwhelmed by numbers, he was dragged away, and in the far distance I still heard him cry: "Bravo! Bravissimo!" I have never, alas! evoked such enthusiasm since. Many tender memories cluster about this play of "David Garrick." I remember my father's preparations for the very first performance: the constant care with which he approached each and

every representation of this character; the loving labor he expended on every detail; his extreme anxiety on first nights in new cities lest he should fall by chance below his own high standard. As a child I recall how puzzled I was when he had shaved off his heavy mustache to fit the fashion of the time. I now possess the sketch for his make-up executed by W. P. Frith, the Royal Academician, and the shoe-buckles which belonged to the real David Garrick, and which my father always wore. The simplicity, pathos, and repose of his portrayal made a strong impression upon me as a child. The superb art of it has become manifest to me in the light of my own endeavors of after years. One of the chiefest joys of the craftsman is to learn to see with clear eyes the masters of his craft.

## XXII

# "THE CRUSHED TRAGEDIAN"

One night during the summer of 1875, in company with my father and his manager, Horace Wall, I attended the walking contest at the old Madison Square Garden. Edward Payson Weston was the attraction, and a great crowd cheered him on. My father was shortly to produce Henry J. Byron's comedy, "The Prompter's Box," which he had rechristened, "The Crushed Tragedian." The type of old actor he wished to portray he was well acquainted with, for he had encountered many such a quaint genius during his early experiences in England. He had not, however, determined on the exact make-up for his part, and his mind was busy trying to reduce the features and the peculiarities of his various models to a single type—a sort of composite picture. Suddenly, on this evening, he stopped short in his talk with Horace Wall and said: "Look, there is the crushed tragedian."

"Where?" said Wall.

My father pointed to a man twenty feet away. "It is Fitzaltamont himself," said he.

"That is the Count Johannes," replied Wall, and he proceeded to explain that Johannes, who was truly no count but one plain unvarnished Jones, had of late exploited himself in Shakespeare's tragedies to the vast delight of persons given to the hurling of missiles, and that it was the custom of the "count" to perform behind

a huge net which was stretched between himself and his admirers so that their hysterical tributes of eggs, potatoes, and other edibles might be received (if in discussing the conflict between genius and enthusiasm one may employ the language of the ring) without Hamlet's melancholy being enhanced by a black eye, Othello's revenge impeded by the tapping of his claret, or Macbeth's apostrophe to the bloody dagger interrupted by a blow on the bread-basket.

Then and there my father decided that here was the very type for which he had been seeking. We followed Count Johannes about the Garden for an hour, my father noting his manner, his gesture, his poses. So well did he absorb the man-of-title's peculiar graces that, when a few months later "The Crushed Tragedian" had won the favor of the town, that nobleman became so incensed at the portraiture that, to my father's great delight and the mirth of the community, he instituted an action for libel.

Meanwhile, having, so to speak, anchored his type on this visit to the Garden, my father next gave his attention to the matter of costume.

During the early part of the play De Lacy Fitzaltamont is a very seedy individual indeed, and it was necessary to provide garments which should indicate his condition. My father was considering this matter when one day he walked across Madison Square with Mr. Wall. The benches were, as usual, tenanted by many a woebegone fellow at odds with fortune. One man especially attracted my father's attention, for he was walking up and down rather rapidly within a very small space. The weather was hot and movement to be avoided, yet this man, like a caged thing, paced back and forth.

"That's the very suit of clothes I want," said my father to Wall. "You must start a conversation with that man and get those things—coat, vest, trousers, hat, neck-cloth, shoes, everything! Buy him an entirely new outfit, and have those things sent to me," and he passed on, leaving Wall to his novel task.

"Hot, isn't it?" said Wall to the stranger.

The man paused in his walk and gazed at Wall.

"Do you believe in God?" said he.

This was unexpected.

"Oh, yes, certainly!" said Wall, a trifle disconcerted. "Have a cigar?" and he proffered one to the man.

"No, no!" said the shabby one, and he laid his hand on Wall's shoulder. "No, no! Tell me," said he, "do you think I shall be saved?"

"Why shouldn't you be?" said Wall.

"Why *should* I be?" said the man. "But there are many mansions, many mansions."

"Let us sit down and talk it over," said Wall.

"No, no!" said the man. "I'm an old soldier."

"Well, even so," said Wall. "You sit down occasionally, don't you?"

"Never in face of the foe," said the man.

Wall began to feel uneasy.

"What foe?" said he.

"The devil and all his works," said the man.

"I tell you what it is," said Wall, "we'd better get something to eat."

"They shall eat their bread with carefulness, and drink their water with astonishment," said the man.

"How would you like a new suit of clothes?" said Wall, feeling that he had better get at the heart of the matter.

Said the man: "I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badger's skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk."

"Well hardly that," said Wall. "I mean just a plain, nice, new suit of clothes."

Said the man: "I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands and a chain on thy neck."

"That is not quite what I mean," said Wall. "The fact is——"

"And I put a jewel on thy forehead and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head," said the man.

Wall perceived that he was dealing with a being distracted. But his experience assured him that a five-dollar bill was an excellent argument, so he produced one and offered it to his new acquaintance.

The stranger tore the bill in two, flung it in the air and cried: "Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath."

The weary derelicts of the surrounding benches began to sit up and listen. A number of children approached curiously.

"What shall I do to be saved?" said the man.

"I advise you to eat a large plate of clam chowder," said Wall, and taking his new friend by the arm he gently urged him toward Fourth Avenue.

Without more words they reached the Ashland House where Wall resided. Here they entered the barber-shop.

"Good afternoon," said the head barber.

"What shall I do to be saved?" said the wayfarer.

E. A. SOTHERN AS THE CRUSHED TRAGEDIAN

"He'll take a bath," said Wall. "Cleanliness is next to godliness," said he to the man.

"Then there is hope," said the man.

"In soap," said Wall.

With the aid of the colored bootblack the distracted one disrobed and was soon in hot water—a condition wherewith he was sadly familiar, but an element to which he had long been a stranger.

"Clothes brushed? Shoes shined?" said the colored boy.

"Certainly," said Wall. "Take the gentleman's wardrobe."

The various tattered garments were gathered together and, under Wall's instructions, carefully placed in seclusion. Then, as swiftly as his somewhat large bulk would permit, Wall hied him to a ready-made clothier, where he purchased an entire outfit for the man in the tub.

The hot water had had a soothing effect upon that eccentric stranger, for the colored boy reported that he had been singing softly to himself. Shortly he called for salvation, and the colored boy and Wall assisted him to dry and to dress.

He emerged quite unconscious of his changed attire, and approaching the head barber remarked: "What shall I do to be saved?"

"Shave," said that artist. "Shave and hair-cut!"

"That's right," said Wall, "fix him up."

Quite unresisting, the stranger was placed in the chair, and singing softly angelic music he was scraped and cropped and polished, and at length arose a cleaner and evidently a wiser man, for he now said to Wall:

"I'm hungry."

"Good!" said that philanthropist, and led the way to

the restaurant. Here he plied his guest with excellent fare, meanwhile keeping up a cheerful chatter.

The late tatterdemalion, who now looked like a prosperous business man, well-dressed, well-groomed, well-mannered, and, indeed, well-spoken, evinced a fine appetite. He made few remarks, but Wall observed that the more he ate the saner he seemed to become. A little while and his eyes began to close; shortly he was fast asleep.

"Put him to bed," said Wall, and the fortunate waif was half-led half-carried to a bed-chamber. There, for a day and a night, he slept, and when Wall next encountered him he was a sane man.

For two days Wall took care of him, and then with a present of money sent him on his way.

"This is a loan," said the man. "I will pay this back."

"Don't think of it," said Wall. "I have your clothes, you know. They are worth the money."

"You're a queer fellow," said the stranger, "a very queer fellow. I have thought sometimes that you are a little mad."

Two years after this adventure Wall was taking the tickets at the entrance of McVicker's Theatre in Chicago. A man approached with a gayly dressed party and presented tickets for a box. As Wall reached for the tickets his eyes met those of the man.

"What shall I do to be saved?" said Wall.

"I advise you to eat some clam-chowder," said the man.

"Then, there is hope?" said Wall.

"In soap," said the man.

"Here's the money you lent me," said the man.

"You'll find the suit of clothes on the stage," said Wall.

The man looked puzzled, but he entered with his party. After the first act he came out. Said he to Wall: "Sothern's wearing my clothes in this play."

"Certainly he is," said Wall, and then he told the whole story.

Then the man added a prologue, and an epilogue most marvellous. Want had driven him to the verge of insanity. He had but the faintest recollection of his first meeting with Wall. His first clear remembrance of that adventure was of waking up in a clean bed in the Ashland House after many nights spent on park benches. Then for the first time he wondered to see himself arrayed in new and strange garments. In a sort of dream he accepted all that happened, even to the moment when he finally parted from Wall. Then he had taken a walk to think the thing out, but found no solution save in Wall being some kind of an angel. He had answered an advertisement, and had secured work chiefly, he declared, on account of his clothes, for his discarded rags had barred him from most employment. He had prospered, had settled in Chicago, and was now well on the way to fortune.

"Then you are not a philanthropist, after all?" said the man.

"I'm afraid not," said Wall.

"Nor a good angel."

"I weigh two hundred pounds," said Wall.

"Do you mean to tell me," said the man, "that I owe my regeneration entirely to the fact that you wanted those old rags of mine?"

"I must confess that is the fact," said Wall.

"If you had not wanted them I should now be in a padded cell," said the man.

"You were certainly a bit flighty," admitted Wall.

"We are the playthings of the gods," said the man as he returned to his seat in the theatre.

After the play he was presented to my father who inquired with much sympathy concerning his fortunes in the hope of being of some further assistance.

"You are very kind," said the man. "I am much touched by your interest. Perhaps," said he, fingering those ragged garments which had once been his and which were now hanging on the wall of the dressing-room, "perhaps you, too, have known poverty?"

"I have stood in your shoes," said my father.

# PART IV

## MYSELF

## XXIII

# MONSIEUR LA TAPPY

"No, gentleman!" would say Monsieur La Tappy when he disagreed with me, meaning "No, sir," translating literally, for Monsieur La Tappy was my French tutor. "No, gentleman!" cried Monsieur La Tappy on this particular occasion. "Pour moi il n'y a pas de dieu." I was a boy of fourteen; for me there was very much of a God. I was still fresh from school and green in religious observances. I could, however, quite sympathize with Monsieur La Tappy's doubts, or rather convictions. Fate had dealt him some fearful blows. The events of 1870 had ruined him. A refugee, he had fled from France with his young wife and a son and daughter, penniless. He had taught French and music for a living. He was now about fifty years of age, worn to a shadow, thin as a skeleton, want and ill health preying on his vitals; but whenever he came to give me my lesson, he would assume a gayety that was pitiful, throwing off the wretchedness that was gnawing forever at his heart and plunging into the brightest and most rapid of conversation.

I was attending a school of painting at this time—Heatherly's, in Newman Street, London, formerly Leigh's Academy, a famous institution for those who wished to send drawings of the antique for admission to the Royal Academy schools. It was my custom to attend Heatherly's each day from nine until four; then I would go to

a room I had rented off Golden Square, the haunt of wandering minstrels, pathetic ballad-singers, and dilapidated fiddlers. Indeed, I held out in a musical neighborhood, for in the room below me had lived until lately a long-haired fiddler who would have delighted the heart of old King Cole himself. London had proved for him a hard mistress, and he had faded away into a better world. Every afternoon Monsieur La Tappy would come and talk French with me—we merely talked, on any subject—to the accompaniment of sweet music from my friend the violinist or the street singers. We would have tea and such confections as my mother would send me from her home in Kensington, for I did not live in this room—our home was too far away, and I had this place as a sort of modest studio and for the purpose of these conversations. In the evening I attended the life class at Heatherly's from six to eight, and then went back to Kensington. On three mornings of each week, however, I studied water-color with Mr. John O'Connor, who, until recently, had been the scene-painter of the Haymarket Theatre. I began operations with O'Connor on the paint-frame. He was preparing the scenery for Adelaide Neilson's performance of "Twelfth Night." A strange and fascinating world I was introduced to, and some strange and fascinating people did I meet. O'Connor himself was a most nervous and enthusiastic fellow, who worked like a horse. Anybody who thinks scene-painting is easy labor is vastly mistaken; the mere physical strain is tremendous, the requisite skill and invention endless. The rewards are not great, and the work itself, exquisite as much of it is, passes as the winds that blow. No wonder, thought I, that O'Connor wants to give this up and confine himself to painting pictures

DRAWING BY E. H. SOTHERN OF FIGURE IN THE LAOCOON GROUP

OIL SKETCH MADE BY E. H. SOTHERN IN SPAIN

in his own studio. This he shortly did, and with him went I—to Abercorn Place, Saint John's Wood. Shortly we took a trip to Spain, where O'Connor made a great number of drawings, and I tried to do likewise. It was all delightful. I endeavored to be useful with my French, but it halted somewhat, and O'Connor would become impatient and yell at the natives in English. He declared that if one only shouted loud enough and made plenty of gesture, all foreigners would understand.

La Tappy was familiar with paintings, ancient and modern; with literature, French and English, and with the drama; so our talks were instructive. He had travelled a great deal, and my Spanish trip provided material for many a conversation. La Tappy painted a bit, and could take interest in my efforts in that direction. He taught the piano, but his poor fingers were so swollen with chilblains—the fruit of the severe English climate —that he was forever exercising his fingers to keep them limber and in working order. "Il faut jouer mon piano," he would say, playing five-finger exercises in the air while he talked gayly on some subject or another. He had a strange habit of suddenly shutting his eyes very tight, and then opening them very wide. I think it was because he was tired. It was a spasmodic action that was half-comic, half-startling. He wore long side-whiskers, but no mustache. His clothes were quite threadbare. La Tappy always seemed cold. I used to observe him approaching my abode; usually it was raining. He would appear at the end of the street with his umbrella. He used to walk from one lesson to another, to save bus fare; the man was abjectly poor, but proud. Frequently I would try to persuade him to share the sort of picnic meal I would have. Not a bit of it; a cup of tea, no

more, and I knew he was hungry. When he got to my door, he would pull himself together, throw his shoulders back, actually run up the stairs and knock with much briskness on the door. Off, in a flash, his coat; down, with a dash, his hat; gay as could be was he, smacking his hands, volatile as a glass of champagne. Then would ensue a lively conversation. La Tappy you see was doing his duty; this was a lesson. My heart ached sometimes, for I knew that his was heavy; only now and then would he allow the mask to fall away, and then for a moment his face was really one of agony. The lesson over, he would fling out of the room and skip down the stairs, singing or whistling. Once in the street, I would see his shoulders drop and his soul droop. "Pour moi il n'y a pas de dieu!" Indeed, God-forsaken did he look.

One day it was raining dogs and cats, and I was late getting to my room. It was foggy, too; a yellow, beastly fog. La Tappy was always on time to the instant. The woman who looked after the house always made my fire at four o'clock and put a kettle on to boil; I made my own tea. I felt sure La Tappy would be waiting, and I had hurried through the wet street. As I opened the hall door the interior of the ancient house was sombre and mysterious in the gloom of a London afternoon. As I passed in the darkness my lost musician's door, in imagination I seemed to hear him still wooing his violin. I felt my way to my own room quite unable to divest my mind of the accustomed strains. The music seemed to keep time to the dripping of the rain. My room was empty. I threw myself into a chair. The theme of the musician haunted me; my brain echoed it, my heart beat to it, my lips murmured it. Was he trying to reach

me from some remote sphere? Was he—was he? I must have slept. There was La Tappy! with his back to me looking out at the window. As he turned I felt a curious shiver go through me. I took off my coat which was wet (why had I kept it on all this while?) and greeting La Tappy I went to the fire. I busied myself with the tea, and La Tappy began to work his fingers in the air, saying: "Je joue mon piano." I laughed and we talked as usual about all sorts of matters. When I was at a loss for a word he would supply it, and if I did not understand what he said he would repeat the word slowly until I did understand, or he would tell me what the strange word meant. He was in his usual gay spirits; he drank his tea with relish. I was, myself, especially talkative. A funny thing had happened at Heatherly's. I had been a very silent student during the months I had been there, and had made few acquaintances; those around me were all voluble fellows, but I had kept very much to myself, really more from shyness than from churlishness. My easel was next to a stove which was in the middle of the room. It was my habit, of which I was unconscious, I think, to rest my left hand on this stove occasionally while I was using the crayon with my right. This day a fire had been lighted in the stove. I placed my easel and at once rested my hand on the stove, and let out a most pronounced "Damn!" This was the first word I had spoken in that school, and was the means of making me many friends instantly. I told this incident to La Tappy. He laughed gayly; he made that curious action of shutting his eyes tight and then opening them widely; he played his five-finger exercises in the air; he drank his tea. We talked of Spain: of the Alhambra Palace, which I had so

recently visited; of moonlight in the Court of the Lions, where a pretty Spanish lady had played on the guitar and had sung. La Tappy had been there, had sung there on that very spot. We talked of the processions through the streets. I told him about a murder I had witnessed as I sat on a bridge over the Duero sketching. Some students, in those curious Spanish cloaks lined with red, had come out of a wine-shop. There had been a vast amount of talk and gesticulation; a man suddenly lifted his arm and struck; another man ran past me and fell on the farther side of the bridge. O'Connor and I ran and caught him, and held his head. It was the law that those persons found near a wounded or dead man should be arrested. All other people stood aloof and tried to explain this to us. O'Connor shouted in English; I appealed in French. We were arrested by two men in cocked hats and hauled off to jail. The wounded man bled to death. It was a great adventure.

The fog and rain without and the fire within, and the good things my mother had sent me to eat all helped to make my narrative lively; the time passed quickly. At length Monsieur La Tappy rose to go. He was working his poor hands, again he closed his eyes with that curious suddenness and opened them widely. I helped him on with his coat, still chatting. I had been so busy with my anecdote that I had not noticed it before, but it now seemed to me that he was not so gay as usual; the mask seemed a bit awry. It was his custom when handling anything to speak its name in French. As I gave him his coat he said, "Mon surtout"; on receiving his poor, faded slouch-hat he said, "Mon chapeau"; then came the umbrella, and "Mon parapluie."

"Ah," said I gayly, "don't leave that behind, no,

gentleman!" and I burlesqued his way of saying: "No, sir." Then I completed the phrase, "Pour moi il n'y a pas de dieu."

La Tappy had his hand on the door. He turned to me. I fell back in fear. His face was livid; in the dim room his eyes shone like two dull coals. For a second he looked at me, then he raised his right hand above his head and pointed upwards; he tried to speak but no sound came; he seemed to fade through the door. I rubbed my eyes—had I been dreaming? I was so affected that for a moment I stood still; I feared that I had somehow offended him by, so foolishly, burlesquing his words. I ran to the door; there was no sign of him. To the window; it was now 5.30, and as black as ink. I made up my mind to follow him and say I was sorry. I put on my hat and coat, and opened the door of my room. A man met me in the doorway.

"I am Monsieur La Tappy's son," said he. "My father had an appointment with you at four, but I have come to tell you he can't be here; he died at three o'clock."

"He has been here!" said I.

"No. He is dead."

"But he has only left me a moment since."

"Impossible! He is at home dead on his bed."

I could hardly speak: "He died suddenly? He said nothing?"

"He died suddenly, and he spoke one word: 'Pardon.'"

## XXIV

# I CHOOSE A PROFESSION

THE mind's eye blinks a bit when it contemplates my Lord Dundreary in the pulpit. The church, however, was my father's original destination. My grandfather, a very conservative merchant of Liverpool, had set his heart on his son's entrance into holy orders. Indeed, my father studied diligently to that end; but nature rebelled and he compromised later on by taking up the study of medicine. This he pursued for some time, even going so far as to enter the hospital of Saint Bartholomew in London. However, he abandoned the temple of Æsculapius and suddenly went on the stage; so much to the horror of his father that he was obliged to shift for himself for many years, and underwent such labor and disappointment that, after ten years of acting, he seriously considered abandoning the theatre and returning to commercial life, the church and the consulting-room being now out of the question.

Owing to these hard experiences, my father was most eager that his sons should seek less thorny paths. But, on the other hand, he determined to allow our natural inclinations to have full sway, for he remembered how he had rebelled at the authority which compelled him to labor at two callings which were distasteful to him.

During the later years of his life, I saw my father seldom, for he was usually playing in America while I was at school in England. Whenever I did see him, how-

ever, this question as to what I was to be was always broached. Quite suddenly and unexpectedly my father would say: "Well, what are you going to be? This is very important and must be settled before you are much older. You must make up your mind about it at once."

As a matter of fact, I had the vaguest idea of what I wanted to be, since no profession had been chosen for me—for the theatre was tabooed as being a hard, precarious, and impossible field for stupid people, of which it was admitted I was one. I was greatly disconcerted when these attacks were levelled at me. Once I had wished to be a red Indian, later a sailor; by and by, being a very nervous, shy child, I had wished to have the iron nerve and pale, impassive countenance of the Count of Monte Cristo. "The count was pale but firm," struck me as a satisfactory state to be in permanently. My latest plan was to be a farmer. The country, solitude, open air—these things appealed to me strikingly. None of these ideas but the "farmer" did I confide to my parent. He was not enthusiastic and I abandoned the idea. I had some small inclination for drawing, and my father seized on that as the direction I should travel.

"How would you like to be a painter?" said he one day.

"I think I would like it," said I.

"Good!" said he. "That's settled. I'll send you at once to O'Connor. Scene-painting will give you a fine, broad style. Meantime you stoop too much, so we'll go and buy some braces to hold the shoulders back."

This we did with swift decision. I was braced like a soldier in half an hour, and in an hour it had been arranged that I should leave school and take up the study of drawing and color.

I studied scene-painting with those braces on, suffer-

ing torture as I wielded a huge brush in either hand. The connection between scene-painting and standing up straight puzzled me then, and I can't perceive it now, but it was enough for me that my father saw it. What a happy age, that, when the parent is a Godlike being who knows all things! My father was the most adorable of men, all that affection could offer he gave to his children, and in his glorious, buoyant, effervescent nature we saw the constant sunshine of youth and knowledge. To him everything seemed possible. His swift decisions seemed to us the decrees of happy fate. So with enthusiasm I attacked my painting and, indeed, was happy and content until I came to know, after three or four years, that my gift was small, and that it was necessary for me to earn a living more securely and more rapidly than my meagre talent would allow. My father did not believe this, but I knew it.

I came out to America in 1879 with my mother's brother, Captain Hugh Stewart. My father was living at the Gramercy Park Hotel in New York. One day we were at breakfast when in came Mr. James Ruggles, whose father had presented Gramercy Park to the city of New York, as a stone on the pavement at the west end of the park testifies.

The circumstances under which I became an actor are so peculiar that a sceptical nature will discard them as an improbable fiction. Ruggles had dealings with my father in some real-estate matter and was discussing dry details when Sam, the waiter, entered with the breakfast. The eggs were broken into a glass—my father preferred to eat eggs out of the shell.

"I hate eggs served in that beastly American fashion," said my father.

Ruggles looked up. "Oh, come," said he. "You can say beastly or you can say American, but it is offensive to say 'beastly American.' "

"Not at all," said my father, whose mischievous spirit loved the prospect of agitating Ruggles or anybody else—he had the scent for excitement of several Irishmen. "It is both beastly and American, consequently it is correct to say 'beastly American.' "

"I must take exception," said Ruggles, really ruffled. "I am an American, and I must protest against such an expression. It reflects on the manners and habits of my country, and I assure you that I am unable to hear such a phrase used with equanimity." He arose and walked about greatly perturbed.

Sam, the waiter, announced: "Captain Hugh Stewart and Captain Atkinson."

Captain Atkinson was an English cavalry officer, quite of the long, solemn, and rather weary kind, retired, rather elderly.

"We will leave it to Stewart and Atkinson," cried my father apparently in great excitement. Then to Sam: "Take away the breakfast; I am upset, I can't eat it. Now, I say that to break eggs into a glass like that" — pointing to the departing eggs—"is both beastly and American, and Ruggles here says that although admittedly American, it is not beastly, and that the expression offends him. What do you say?" He seemed so honestly excited and perturbed that both the newcomers were at once engaged seriously in considering the problem.

"I like eggs that way," said Atkinson.

"I don't," said Uncle Hugh.

"There!" said my father. "There, and Hugh is a sailor."

The application of this remark was not quite clear, but all eyes wandered to Hugh. I was really concerned. The matter seemed serious.

"How can you expect Atkinson, who is a cavalry officer, to know anything about eggs?" continued my father.

"Oh, I don't know," drawled Atkinson, "I know an egg when I see one."

"One thing is quite certain!" cried my father; "Hugh invented a saddle which was adopted by the army."

This was a master-stroke. My uncle's chief vanity was this very thing. He was a naval officer of great accomplishment and much distinction, but these matters seemed to him as nothing to the fact that he had invented this same saddle.

"Yes!" cried Uncle Hugh. "It took a sailor to make a saddle for the army."

"Yes," drawled Atkinson, "but it's one thing to make a saddle and another to stay in it," and he laughed in a drawn-out, languid, and rather offensive way. "Besides, a tailor should stick to his last."

"Shoemaker," said my father.

"Yes," said Hugh, "shoemaker."

"Atkinson means to say, Hugh," said my father, "'You may ride the waves, my dear Stewart, but you can't stay on a horse.'"

"The devil, I can't!" said Hugh. "I'll race him anywhere for any sum. Come on!"

Hugh was quite hot and Atkinson was annoyed.

"But the eggs!" said my father. "How about the eggs?"

"I say it *is* beastly!" said Hugh.

"I say distinctly it is not!" said Atkinson.

Ruggles approached Atkinson. "Sir," said he, "I thank you."

My father seized the hand of Hugh. "Stewart," said he, "I appreciate this more than I can say. Of course," my father continued, "we can't settle the matter by racing, and one couldn't call a man out for such a trifle; and yet I hate to leave it undecided; Ruggles is serious."

"I hold to my position," said Ruggles.

"Exactly!" said my father. "I, on the other hand, am absolutely adamant in my attitude."

"Let's wrestle for it," said Hugh.

Ruggles, who was about to depart, stopped in amazement.

"Good!" said my father.

"Wrestle!" said Atkinson.

"Yes," said Hugh, "although I *am* a sailor."

"I'll go you!" said Atkinson.

It is incredible, but these two grown-up men seriously encountered. My father cleared away the furniture with enthusiasm; Ruggles, fascinated, looked on; I got up against the wall. They wrestled all over the room, up and down and about—they were under the piano; they fell with fury against the door. Ruggles was perforce made to jump about to get out of the way of the combatants. I loved my Uncle Hugh and was emotionally concerned for him. Atkinson seemed to become a fury incarnate; his long limbs, usually so passive, seemed turned into twisting serpents. Hugh's sea-legs became the tentacles of the octopus. For about three minutes the turmoil lasted; my father, with fire in his eye, ejaculating every now and then, "Beastly has it! No, it doesn't!" as Hugh was down. "Ruggles, you win! No,

you *don't!*" as Hugh, with a superhuman effort, threw Atkinson into the fireplace.

We dragged him out, his hair was singed.

"By gad!" said Atkinson.

"Beastly it is!" said my father.

"I take my leave," said Ruggles.

"Brittania rules the waves!" said Uncle Hugh.

There were congratulations, refreshments; Hugh and Atkinson departed the best of friends.

"Now," said my father to me, "let us decide what you are going to be."

I sat down to a fresh breakfast to consider this weighty matter.

"Come in!" cried my father, who always applied himself to reply to his letters after breakfast, a matter of a couple of hours—he was very methodical about this, punctilious to a degree. "Come in!"

It was Earp! Now Earp was the barber at the Gramercy Park Hotel. He lived in the basement—a perfectly unbelievable man, thin as a rail, six feet three in height, solemn as the sphinx. He eked out his income from barbering by raising white mice; he also kept parrots, love-birds, flying squirrels, a jackdaw. My father was very fond of animals; he always had one, sometimes two dogs with him, and frequently purchased some of Earp's menagerie for his rooms in New York. Earp usually looked after these purchases each night, and brought them to my father when he came in the afternoon. He now appeared. This was the first time I had seen him. He carried his barber's implements in his two hands. My father sat in the middle of the room, where Earp had placed a chair. Earp then took from a large pocket a parrot which crawled on to his shoulder.

My father paid no attention. From another pocket he took two love-birds which crawled up his chest to his head and perched thereon. Two flying squirrels emerged next, and flew at once to the window-curtains and clung there chattering. Several white mice then appeared and began to crawl over my father. At last another parrot bestrode Earp's other shoulder and a jackdaw jumped out of a small bag of razors and stood on a table. I, of course, was surprised. My father spoke not—the thing was customary.

"Fine day," said Earp.

"Isn't it?" said my father.

"Hair-cut!" said a parrot.

I laughed with glee.

"My son—Earp," said my father by way of introduction.

Earp held out a sad hand which I shook solemnly. I felt strangely abashed at living a birdless life.

"Next!" cried the jackdaw.

It is a fact that these parrots and this jackdaw spoke this barbarous talk. "Shave or hair-cut," would one say, "how much?" "Fifteen cents!" would another remark.

Meantime Earp conversed on the topics of the day—politics, stocks, the theatre, real estate, mice, and men. It was all very instructive and amazing to me, lately landed. At last the conversation languished.

"Now," said my father, "Eddy, what is it to be? What are you going to be?"

I had been wool-gathering, watching the mice and the squirrels. Recalled to the serious affairs of the planet, I looked rather blank; at last I ventured: "I think I would like to go on the stage."

My father sat up so suddenly that Earp's birds nearly lost their balance.

"You want to give up your drawing!" said he.

I told him my reasons at length. I knew I was hurting him and hated to do it. He had set his heart on my being a painter, but I lamed him with reasons. At last he seemed to make up his mind suddenly.

"Good!" said he, as Earp finished him up. "I'll send you to the Boston Museum. You shall go at once—to-morrow! I'll give you a letter to Mr. Field, the manager. Mrs. Vincent will take rooms for you. You won't get any salary, because you are not worth any. I'll give you twenty dollars a week on which you will have to live, as I and other poor actors have done before you. You'll have to work hard; it's no joke. You are making an awful mistake, but I won't stand in your way. I want you to choose, but you must get at it quick and find out what it is like."

I knew what it was like, for children have sharp ears, and I had heard ever since I was a child how my father had failed and failed and failed; how he landed in 1852 in Boston, where I was going to, and appeared in "The Heir-at-Law" as Doctor Pangloss; how the audience at the National Theatre hissed him; how Mr. Leonard, the manager, discharged him after the play; how he went next day to the Howard Athenæum and asked the manager for a job; how the manager engaged him, and he played four performances a day while my mother played small parts also and nursed her little son Lytton, and when the next day after his discharge a man appeared at Mrs. Fisher's boarding-house in Bullfinch Place—a man who said he represented a newspaper, which, of course, he did not—and calling my father to

the door suggested that a small sum would prevent a certain article recounting his lamentable failure from appearing in print; my mother, who was at the top of the staircase, came down and cried out: "If you don't thrash him I'll never speak to you again!"

The conflict which ensued and the rejoicing which followed; the penury; the hardships; the determination to give up the theatre after ten years of labor—all this I knew, and had heard with those same sharp ears of childhood. But it mattered not.

"Remember," said my father, "always say you will do anything, and take anything. You can't learn to act by telling yourself how much you are worth; other people will have to tell you that."

The morrow brought a slight change of plan, however.

"You shall make your first appearance with me," said my father. "I open at Abbey's Park Theatre next week. You shall play the cabman in 'Sam.'"

He went to a trunk and produced the part.

"Here you are. You have only one line, but it is a most important one. Sam comes on the stage and the cabman follows him. Sam is a delightfully debonair spendthrift who owes everybody everything, and he has neglected to pay the cabman. He greets his host and hostess buoyantly. He turns to find the cabman standing, whip in hand, and touching his hat interminably as though he were wound up for that purpose.

"'Now, my good man, what do you want?' says Sam.

"You reply: ''Arf a crown, your Honor; I think you won't object.'

"Sam protests that he has not the amount handy and borrows it from his host. The incident is important as it instantly illustrates Sam's character.

"You have seen London cabmen. Think it over. Get your clothes and your make-up ready and then we'll rehearse it."

I procured a wig and side-whiskers, a heavy overcoat, an old high hat, a whip, thick gloves, gaiters. I made a cabman's badge out of cardboard. Night and day I lived, moved, and had my being as a cabman. Like the actor who painted himself all over so as to feel like Othello, I tried to be a cabman inside and out. At length rehearsal day arrived. I had wandered all over New York, muttering: "'Arf a crown, your Honor; I think you won't object." Persons had heard me in the street, in the park, and had looked on me with suspicion. I had visited the theatre, and had upon the deserted stage repeated the line again and again. A very fever possessed me. I was alternately terrified and elated. I had read of the first appearances of distinguished actors, they seemed to have been almost invariably disastrous. Yet what misfortune could be mine with this one line: "'Arf a crown, your Honor; I think you won't object"? One could not get mixed up with such a simple phrase. I had been told of that unfortunate who had to declare: "Behind the thicket there stands a swift horse," and who, agitated by false friends who had called his attention to all possible mistakes, had at last said: "Behind the swiffit there skands a thick korthe." But my way was clear.

Although extremely nervous at the rehearsal, I delivered the line fairly well. My father did not praise nor did he denounce me. I felt I had escaped censure. I let up on my study of the part and looked on victory as within my grasp.

The fateful night arrived. I felt frightened, but secure.

NEW YORK, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1879.

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| Mr JONATHAN RUMBELLOW | Mr W BLAKELEY |
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| CAB DRIVER | Mr. A MANNING |
| MAN SERVANT | Mr H FAULKNER |
| TELEGRAPH BOY | THE GENUINE ARTICLE |
| ALICE | Miss JULIA STEWART |
| Mrs TRIMBUSH | Miss IDA LEWIS |
| MARIE | Miss ADA WHITMAN |

**SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY:**

ACT I.—Interior of Trimbush's Country House at Scarborough
Painted by Mr H E HOYT

ACT II.—Interior of Trimbush's Country House at Scarborough.
Painted by Mr. H. E HOYT

ACT III.—Exterior of Trimbush's Country House at Scarborough.
Painted by Mr. GEO. HEISTER.

PROGRAMME PARK THEATRE,
SEPTEMBER 8, 1879

Mr. F. H. Sothern's first appearance on the stage when he took Mr. A. Manning's part as the cab-driver

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| DIEGO, an Innkeeper | MR. J. H. RING |
| DE BREANT, NAVAILLES, CHAVERNAY — Noblemen | MR. L. J. LORING; MR. G. A. SCHILLER; MR. E. DEE |
| MALICORNE, BANNERMAN, TONIO — Bravos | MR. J. NOLAN; MR. J. H. JONES; MR. C. B. MAFFITT |
| NOTARY | MR. F. E SHANNON |
| BLANCHE DE NEVERS | MISS ANNIE CLARKE |
| PRINCESS DE NEVERS | MISS GEORGIA TYLER |
| ZILLAH, a Gitana | MISS SADIE MARTINOT |
| PAGE TO LAGARDERE | MISS ROSE TEMPLE |
| MADELON, a maid | MISS RUSSELL |

**PROLOGUE.**

**THE SPANISH FRONTIER—1697.**

*Scene 1st.*—Interior of the Inn.
*Scene 2d.*—Exterior of the Inn.

PROGRAMME BOSTON MUSEUM,
DECEMBER 8, 1879

Mr. E. H. Sothern, as Mr. E. Dee, played his first rôle, having a part consisting of only one line

"Well, my good man, what do you want?" said my father.

I gazed on him spellbound. I was conscious of the footlights, otherwise I seemed to be floating outside of myself. I touched my hat constantly.

"Well, my good man, what do you want?" repeated my father.

I kept touching my hat but could think of no word to utter.

The audience laughed, and during their laugh my father said to me: "Go on. Say 'arf a crown, your Honor."

I was so terrified that he should thus expose me before the people that panic seized me.

"Go on!" said my father intensely, and I saw that he was desperate. Still I continued to touch my hat, but said nothing. I felt quite incapable of thought.

"Go off!" said my father between his teeth.

This I incontinently did.

The scene proceeded, but I was aware that I had ruined my father's entrance and spoiled that exhibition of his character of which he had spoken. I was quite overwhelmed at my stupidity. It had all seemed so easy, and I had been so perfect.

"I am so sorry," I cried to my father when he came to his room. "Why, I knew the line backward."

"Yes," said my father, "but that's not the way to know it."

"But *one* line," I wailed. "It seemed impossible I could fail."

"Yes," said my father. "Most people think that."

I went to Boston and entered the Museum Company.

I returned to New York to see my father in about a

month. Again Earp entered. Again the mice and the parrots and the love-birds and the squirrels took their part in the proceedings.

"How do you like the stage?" said my father.

"I like it," said I.

"You will suffer," said my father and his eyes looked moist. "I hope soon you'll be worth a salary," he added seriously.

"How much?" said one parrot.

"Fifteen cents," said the other.

"Not yet," said I, and my father smiled sadly.

## XXV

# "SAINT VINCENT"

THE "Boston Museum," whither I was bound, was one of the last remnants of Puritan prejudice against the theatre as a place of amusement. It was a "museum," not a "theatre." The word "theatre" was not permitted in any advertisement or playbill. For many years its doors were closed from Saturday afternoon until Monday morning—there being no Saturday evening performance. In the front of the building, on the floors over the box-office, was an exhibition of stuffed animals, wax-figures, mummies, mineral specimens, and other odds and ends, which enabled the tender of conscience to persuade themselves that this was an institution of learning, a school of instruction, and by no means a place of amusement. True, on the first floor was a theatre where plays were given just as in any other theatre, but the intolerable and unholy atmosphere of the playhouse was mitigated by the presence of several decayed Egyptians whose enlightened and tolerant ghosts must have laughed in scorn at such self-deception, while the groups of intelligent animals and the distinguished company of waxworks must, in the "stilly night," have held weird conferences as to what virtue resided in their mouldy forms which could change the abode of Satan into a house for the godly. Certain it is that persons who would have considered their souls damned had they entered the theatre, frequented the Boston Museum

without a qualm, although every kind of play was produced there from farce to burlesque. Pretty dancers were not taboo, and the broadest kind of comedy was tolerated.

Says Mr. Clapp, a local historian: "The Museum made an eloquent appeal to the patronage of sober persons affected with scruples against the godless 'theatre.' To this day, there are citizens of Boston who patronize no other place of theatrical amusement than its 'Museum.'" Many of the most distinguished actors have played here supported by the stock company and, before people who would not enter another playhouse to see them. Writes Mr. Clapp: "The appeal to the prejudiced was as successful as it was shrewd."

In 1879, when I joined the Museum Company, that temple of the drama still had a distinct following of its own. Each member of the organization had, from long association and distinguished service, become something of an institution. Citizens had been brought up from childhood to love and revere them. Especially was this the case with Mr. William Warren and Mrs. Vincent, whose service in this one theatre covered a period of nearly fifty years. "The actual merit of the performance at the Boston Museum was, perhaps, greater than that of any other stock company in the country." Mr. Warren has been declared the superior of his cousin, Joseph Jefferson. And yet, outside of the city of Boston—save in a few New England towns—neither he nor Mrs. Vincent was known at all. To them, however, a modest but established home and the perpetual enjoyment of a circle of intimate and admiring friends compensated for a wider fame. Many of a greater notoriety on looking back would gladly have changed places with

*From a photograph by the Notman Studio*

WILLIAM WARREN

them; to have been able to contemplate in retrospect so many years of peaceful labor, and to have been so truly honored, and so well beloved. To such an extent did this sentiment prevail in the case of Mrs. Vincent that the Vincent Hospital, founded in her name under the auspices of Trinity Church, is in these days sometimes inadvertently called "Saint Vincent's Hospital."

Some years ago was sold in Boston the collection of one Mr. Brown, a famous gatherer of theatrical programmes, autograph letters, and so forth. I purchased at this sale some letters of my father. One of these was written from Weymouth, England, in 1852, to Mr. Leonard, the manager of the National Theatre, Boston. My father applied for an engagement, giving a list of 396 parts which he had played, and was prepared to play. He was at this time twenty-five years of age, so his experience as an actor in England may be deduced therefrom. Mr. Leonard engaged him for leading comedy.

In 1852, under the name of Douglas Stewart, as I have said, he opened in the part of Doctor Pangloss in "The Heir-at-Law." His failure was so complete that the audience in an uproar interfered with the progress of the play. My father approached the footlights, holding up his hand for silence, which, having been granted, he said: "Ladies and gentlemen, if you will permit me to finish the play I will go home and learn how to act." He was allowed to continue and at the end of the performance he was discharged for incapacity. It was no unusual thing then, especially in England, for audiences to declare their displeasure with the utmost violence. Only so lately as the year 1825 had Edmund Kean been hooted from the stage of a Boston theatre.

My father accepted his dismissal with the buoyancy of youth, fortified, perhaps, by the distresses of greater actors than himself, and applied with a light heart to the manager of the Howard Athenæum.

"What can you do?" said the manager.

"Anything," said my father.

"What salary do you want?" said the manager.

"Anything," said my father again.

"What do you mean?" said the manager.

"I mean," said my father, "that I want work; that I will take any kind of work and any salary you will give me."

He was engaged at nine dollars a week, and played two new parts each week, and two performances a day.

My father's mood at this time may be gathered from his correspondence with a New York manager to whom he applied for a position. That worthy had doubtless heard of the fiasco at the National Theatre, for he replied by telegram: "I would not have you if you paid me a hundred dollars a week." To which my father answered: "Terms accepted. Expect me by next train."

On arriving in Boston my father had found shelter in a boarding-house kept by Mrs. Fisher at No. 2 Bullfinch Place—a quaint, quiet street with a kind of toll-gate across it close to Mrs. Fisher's house. Here in this secluded retreat Mr. William Warren and a few other actors resided.

After this disastrous first appearance, my father and mother and their one son, Lytton, moved their abode to the house of Mrs. Vincent. Now began a friendship that lasted until my father's death, and which was bequeathed to me, for Mrs. Vincent survived him by some years.

NATIONAL THEATRE.

T. B. A.

FIRST APPEARANCE IN AMERICA OF

MR. DOUGLAS STEWART,
MRS. ARCHBOLD,
—AND—
Mad'lle CAROLINE PALSER,

The Popular Dancense, from the London Theatres.

ON MONDAY EVENING, NOV. 1ST, 1852,

Will be performed the Sterling Comedy in 5 acts, entitled

THE HEIR AT LAW.

WRITTEN BY GEORGE COLMAN, THE YOUNGER.

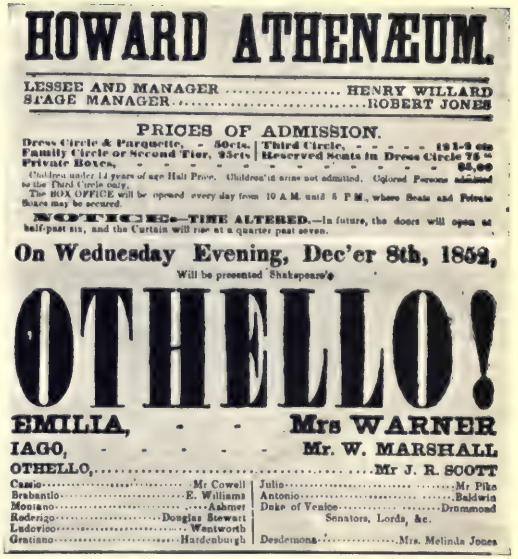
Daniel Dowlas, Baron Duberly, Mr W. H. Curtis
Dr Pangloss.....Mr Douglas Stewart
(From the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, his first appearance in America.)
Dick Dowlas.....Mr Prior
Steadfast.....Mr J. Munroe
Zekiel Homespun.....Mr F. S. Buxton
Kenrick.....Mr S. D. Johnson

Henry Moreland.....Mr Aiken
John.....Mr G. Johnson
Waiter at Hotel.....Mr Philips
Waiter at Blue Boar.....Mr Knowlton

Cicely Homespun.....Mrs W. H. Smith
Lady Duberly.....Mrs Archbold
(From the London Theatres.)
Caroline.....Mrs Prior

PROGRAMME NATIONAL THEATRE, BOSTON, NOVEMBER 1, 1852

E. A. Sothern, as Douglas Stewart, makes his first appearance in America



HOWARD ATHENÆUM.

LESSEE AND MANAGER.....HENRY WILLARD
STAGE MANAGER.....ROBERT JONES

PRICES OF ADMISSION.

Dress Circle & Parquette, - 50cts. | Third Circle, - - - - - 12 1-2 cts
Family Circle or Second Tier, 25cts | Reserved Seats in Dress Circle 75 "
Private Boxes, - - - - - - - - - - $5,00

Children under 12 years of age Half Price. Children in arms not admitted. Colored Persons admitted to the Third Circle only.

The BOX OFFICE will be opened every day from 10 A.M. until 4 P.M., where Seats and Private Boxes may be secured.

NOTICE.—TIME ALTERED.—In future, the doors will open at half-past six, and the Curtain will rise at a quarter past seven.

On Wednesday Evening, Dec'er 8th, 1852,

Will be presented Shakespeare's

OTHELLO!

EMILIA, - - - Mrs WARNER
IAGO, - - - - - Mr. W. MARSHALL
OTHELLO,.....Mr J. R. SCOTT

Cassio.....Mr Cowell
Brabantio.....E. Williams
Montano.....Ashmer
Roderigo.....Douglas Stewart
Lodovico.....Wentworth
Gratiano.....Hardenburgh

Julio.....Mr Pike
Antonio.....Baldwin
Duke of Venice.....Drummond
Senators, Lords, &c.

Desdemona.....Mrs. Melinda Jones

PROGRAMME HOWARD ATHENÆUM, BOSTON, DECEMBER 8, 1852

E. A. Sothern, as Douglas Stewart, plays Roderigo in "Othello"

Often have I pictured to myself these penniless babes in the wood. My mother, then a girl of nineteen, and my father in the heyday of his youth, making fun of misfortune as though that monster were a friend, snapping their fingers at disaster, and quite disconcerting the demon of poverty by laughing in his face. No ill fortune is terrible at the age of twenty-five.

It was at this moment that his lifelong friendship for Mrs. Vincent began. It was on her sympathetic bosom that my mother relieved her grief, and it was her joyous counsel and all-conquering chuckle that fortified these children to face fortune anew. Mrs. Vincent always spoke of my father as "her son" and he forever called her "Little Mother." In her memoirs she says: "He was the most impudent, audacious, good-for-nothing, good-hearted fellow." He was forever making her the victim of all sorts of mad pranks. To the last of her days she could never speak of him without uncontrollable laughter, even when she was pausing to dry her tears at the thought of his having passed away.

Mrs. Vincent, all her life long, was devoted to a modest and quiet charity, and she found at once a ready disciple in my father. Early in their friendship he deposited with her a magic hundred dollars which was never to grow less. When in the course of her ministrations to the unfortunate, the low-water mark of twenty dollars was reached, my father was to be notified and the balance restored. When Mrs. Vincent died, a twenty-dollar bill was found by Miss Mina Berntsen under the paper of her bureau drawer where she habitually kept it—part of this fairy fund which had maintained its evergreen quality for twenty years.

My father's annual visit to Boston was a time of

whirlwind excitement for Mrs. Vincent. His approach was heralded weeks before by all sorts of extravagant letters and post-cards and telegrams; love-messages written in red ink on the outside of envelopes—ten, twenty of them posted at a time—calling her "Adored One!" "Beautiful Stalactite!" "Lady Godiva!" "Boadicea!" a thousand extravagances. Then one day his card would be taken up by an hysterical maid servant named "Mattie," who, with starting eyes and a fist in her mouth, would announce: "The Duke of Wellington," or "The Sultan of Turkey." Mrs. Vincent would welcome him in her best frock, with such dear, old-fashioned curls on either side of her rotund face, chuckling so that her whole body shook. Then such greetings, such laughter, such tears, such stories, such mad doings on my father's part, and such delight in his mischief by this dearest of old ladies. Parrots, cats, canaries; Mattie, the eccentric maid, with her face full of wonder! Then an account of the various charities to which the hundred dollars had contributed most faithfully, and in much detail delivered, and many tales of poor creatures yet to be relieved, and plans and confidences and reminiscences of old friends long gone.

"My dear!" cried Mrs. Vincent to my father, "the vicar of Saint Paul's Church had intended to make the poor people of the parish eat *geese* instead of turkeys for Christmas."

"Great heavens! *Why?*" said my sympathetic father.

"Because geese are *cheaper*," said the distressed Mrs. Vincent.

"What did you do?" cried my father with rising indignation.

"Do!" cried Mrs. Vincent. "I just waited until

after the morning service; then I went into the rectory. I bearded the rector in his den!"

"The devil you did!" cried my excited parent.

"Yes," panted the old lady, "and I did not leave him until he had sworn that the poor people of the parish should have turkey!"

"Hooray!" cried my father.

"Stop!" said Mrs. Vincent, rising eagerly. "Stop! Not only turkey, but cranberry sauce!"

"Incredible!" said my father.

"Yes!" said the dear one, "and what is more—celery!"

"I can't believe it," said my father.

"It is true," declared Mrs. Vincent.

"You swear it?" insisted my father.

"I swear it!" cried that dearest old woman.

On my arrival in Boston, it was to Mrs. Vincent's house in Chambers Street that I made my way. I had many misgivings as I walked through the curious, intricate, winding, irregular, Boston streets, so like the streets of an old English town. The queer New England laws my father had threatened me with, the historical associations—Faneuil Hall, "the cradle of liberty"; the old State House with the lion and the unicorn still rampant; the Boston tea-party; the mad experience of the mad Edmund Kean; my father's disastrous failure in 1852—all these kept me busy thinking as I walked along. I was quite sure I should fail to begin with. I was not yet nineteen. Public life, curiously enough, was entirely distasteful to me; not especially theatre life, but any life with crowds of people. I hated the thought that I should have to perfect my work in public at rehearsal, to exhibit myself in the process; all my ignorance and

stupidity and imperfection I knew would tie me up in knots and paralyze me and sicken and dishearten me. How I wished that I could study it all in private, and then stand forth confident, victorious. But it could not be done, one has to rehearse and look ridiculous and feel ridiculous, and be made ridiculous and generally pay for one's footing in the theatre. A conceited person with a comfortably thick skin may pass through this period without discomfort, but a diffident young man who has the fortune to be sensitive and is aware of his own insufficiency must undergo torture. People are not consciously unkind, but there are few things so comic as an utterly untrained male actor trying to act. I knew well what was in store for me, and looked forward with a definite dread to my initiation into the Boston Museum Company.

Wrote my father to Mrs. Vincent: "Eddy is a dear boy, but he will never make an actor." Indeed, it is not for me to say that my father was wrong. Thus recommended, there I was on my way to the dear old lady's arms. My father had failed in this very town and had succeeded. Edmund Kean had been pelted with cabbages, and was a great man notwithstanding. Truly I had no hunger for these experiences, yet should they be mine it was evident there was no need to despair. Let me proceed toward disaster with a light heart, catch my cabbage on the wing dexterously. Perhaps some day this same cabbage would be pointed to with proud interest—maybe sold at auction as a valuable memento—who could tell? In the Players Club is preserved a back tooth which once belonged to George Frederick Cook. I was to open in the play called "The Duke's Motto." I had my part in my pocket. There were many cues,

*From a photograph by Sarony*

EDWARD H. SOTHERN IN 1879

but the only line for me was: "To the health of our noble host." There was not much opportunity for distinction, nor, on the other hand, could I excite any great distrust or antipathy. There seemed no chance for cabbages!

It was in a cheerful mood, therefore, that I knocked at Mrs. Vincent's door.

"My grandson!" cried that dear creature as she took me to her embrace, "for your father is my son."

Well, I made friends with the parrots and the cats, and the canaries and the strange Swedish girl, Mattie, who always walked either sideways or backward and forever was laughing or falling down-stairs. Some friends of Mrs. Vincent were present. They looked rather startled when told I was to be an actor. One man began to laugh in a breathless way—I learned later it was his habit to laugh like that even in grief. He meant no comment on my intentions, but he distressed me sorely. Mrs. Vincent took in lodgers; also she rented wardrobes to amateur actors. The lower floor of her house was filled with costumes of all periods. Members of the Harvard University "Hasty Pudding Club" were great customers of hers. It was a quaint household, old-fashioned, Dickensonian. To me all the people were new and strange and delightful; hospitable, affectionate, saturated with remembrances of my father, and looking on me with an amused curiosity, as children might look on a firecracker. They seemed to speculate as to what direction I should explode in, whether I would be able to act or not. I was quite sure I could not, and again a kind of despair settled on me.

The next morning I went to rehearsal. Rehearsal was a daily ceremony at the Boston Museum, such as

prayers in an English house, or grace at a proper dinner-table. Ten o'clock each morning a rehearsal. Punctual as I was, my dear Mrs. Vincent was before me. She introduced me to the company as they came in, thirty or forty of them. Up I would bob and shake hands and be greeted and sit down again by my guide philosopher and "Mother." The ceremony became quite embarrassing and even comic, for I was shy and conscious. At length Mr. William Warren entered. I was just from England; I had never heard of Mr. Warren; I had never, until a few days before, known that such a place as the Boston Museum existed. Mr. Warren's long and devoted career as an artist was as foreign to me as it is at this day to the vast majority of Americans, to say nothing of English people. His great light had been hidden under the Boston bushel all these years, and his happy lot was that he practically had no history outside his native Common.

"Mr. William Warren," said my dear Mrs. Vincent, "this is Mr. Sothern, the son of E. A. Sothern."

I did not rise, so distracted was I with much introduction. Mr. Warren shook me by the hand and spoke a kindly word, greeted Mrs. Vincent, and passed on. But I had made an awful mistake. I had not risen to greet the idol of Boston. The manner of the entire company which had been kindly tolerant before, now became frigid. I felt something was wrong, but I could not tell what. For a week I suffered the cold shoulder. At last Joseph Haworth, with whom I had struck up a friendship, thanks to Mrs. Vincent's intercession, took pity on my ignorance and told me that everybody resented my treatment of Mr. Warren. Mr. Warren himself had remained behind on that fateful day after the rehearsal.

As I left my dressing-room, where I had been busy, I encountered him. He patted me on the back. Said he: "My boy, I knew your father and mother; come and see me at my lodgings at Mrs. Fisher's; we must have a chat. Perhaps I may be able to help you."

Of course I called, and of course the dear old actor was sweet and kind. Here in the very house wherein my boy father and girl mother had lodged, Mr. Warren took me under his wing.

Said Haworth: "The people resent your behavior to Mr. Warren."

"But Mr. Warren doesn't resent it," said I, while before me arose visions of cat-o'-nine-tails, and burning witches, and heads without ears, and Edmund Kean standing there a mark for cabbages, and my father's speech to the audience in 1852.

"My adventures have begun," I reflected.

"To the health of our noble host!" I cried with much assurance on the opening night of "The Duke's Motto," already one line had become a small matter to me. I began to feel my wings. My father had arranged to provide me with that twenty dollars a week of which I have spoken. I was to receive no salary whatever from Mr. Field, the manager of the Museum. But Mr. William Seymour asked me to appear on salary day.

"I receive no salary," said I.

"No," said he, "but Mr. Field desires you to come up with the others and accept an envelope."

This I accordingly did and was handed an envelope with nothing in it. No sooner did I grasp it than one of the minor members of the company said: "You couldn't lend me ten dollars out of your salary, could you?"

"You can have it all," said I and I handed him my envelope.

He looked at me, puzzled, but took the envelope and opened it. "Don't you get anything?" said he.

"No," said I.

"Why not?" said he.

"I'm not worth it," said I.

Such an admission struck him quite speechless, and I myself believe it is a unique confession, albeit quite sincere, for Edmund Kean's cabbages were ever in my mind's eye, and fame appeared to be a most fickle flame, liable to be blown out even by those who had been at the pains of kindling it, as one blows out the gas and is poisoned thereby.

The economy of a stock company offered interesting instances here at the Museum. Some of the actors had no intention of letting grass grow under idle feet. One player was a barber by day, another, the beloved "Smithy," was a tailor—very properly, the tailor played fops. I had a particular friend who was a cab-driver. Who shall point the finger of scorn that these had two strings to their bow? Their example might be well followed; an honest barber or, for that matter, an honest cab-driver, may be the noblest work of God. And well may the actor's study of mankind be multiplied a thousandfold by the scraping of innumerable chins or the driving of the accidental wayfarer from the cradle to the grave. Who could better take man's measure than the tailor, dissect him to a hair than the barber, or consider his final destination than the cab-driver?

For three months I disported myself at the Museum. Then my father arrived in Boston on his annual visit. We were at the time playing a burlesque called "Pip-

*From a photograph by the Notman Studio*

"ST. VINCENT" (MRS. R. H. VINCENT)

pins." I had quite a part in this, and was made up to look like "Lord Dundreary." My father had sent me one of his wigs and a pair of whiskers. His delight when he saw me thus decorated was unbounded. I had to sing a song and execute a dance. Most excellently foolish I was, but it was one of the rungs of the ladder, and I was learning that I had feet.

Immediately on my father's arrival in Boston, I went with him to call on Mrs. Vincent. She lived, at that time, in Charles Street, having recently moved from Chambers Street. As the door opened, my father dashed past the startled servant-maid, rushed up-stairs two steps at a time, flew like a cyclone into Mrs. Vincent's room, saying:

"Come, we must fly instantly; all is discovered! We are lost! Your parents are in hot pursuit. Quick! Send for hot rum and water, and an onion! I have pistols and asafœtida!"

Meanwhile, to the terror of some sedate persons whom Mrs. Vincent had invited to meet my parent, he seized that gentle, sweet, and hysterical matron, wrapped a camel's-hair shawl around her and carried her down-stairs; placed her in her rustling silks into the carriage which had brought us to her door, cried to the driver: "Quick, drive for your life! We are pursued! Five dollars! ten dollars! twenty dollars if we escape!" The driver was on the box by now; the horses were prancing, for this excitement was contagious. Heads appeared from neighboring windows, passers-by stopped and stared. I, myself, was bewildered, so intense and earnest was my father. Dash! we went up Charles Street.

"They are after us!" cried my father out at the window. "Go on! drive round and round the Com-

mon till I tell you to stop! Ten dollars! Twenty dollars!"

The driver was now standing up on the box, belaboring the horses. Mrs. Vincent's cries and laughter alarmed persons in the street. We went at much risk quite round the public garden and back to the Charles Street house, my father violently directing operations from the window, and intermittently declaring to Mrs. Vincent his adoration for her, saying that "since they had to die, they would die together!" and much to the same effect. Mrs. Vincent's perturbed household gathered her up and took her back to her room; the cabman, wild-eyed and rewarded, went his way, and an uproarious party discussed the amazing adventure.

How could such people ever grow old? They never did grow old; evergreen was Mrs. Vincent, a perennial was my father; both of them had the hearts of children, responsive as children to the touch of joy or sorrow.

I went one day with these two to visit the poor people who were for the moment Mrs. Vincent's particular charges; my father accompanying her as a friend on the condition that his part in the ministrations was not to be divulged and stipulating that he was to be introduced as the Grand Duke Alexis. To many humble abodes we made our way with a carriage full of baskets and parcels. The Grand Duke Alexis was received with much awe, and created great astonishment by showing these poor people the strangest conjuring tricks. In one house he asked an old woman to please give him a plate of roast corks.

"Roast corks!" said the astonished dame.

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Vincent, "a favorite dish in Russia."

"They keep out the cold," said my father. Some corks were produced. "Don't bother to cook them," said my father, "I'll eat them raw."

The good people observed this strange nobleman solemnly eat these corks, or seem to do so. He would lift a cork to his mouth and palm it dexterously and drop it onto his lap. A small child got under the table and discovered the deception, and there was much merriment in consequence. At another house my father extracted coins from Mrs. Vincent's ear, and discovered coins in the pockets of people whose pockets seldom harbored such visitants. Packs of cards were produced and strange tricks accomplished with them; ventriloquism made old people and young people look up chimneys and into cupboards. Never were such feats performed before in these humble homes. The climax was reached when my father asked one household if he might be permitted to stand on his head in the corner of the room and say his prayers. This he actually did, Mrs. Vincent explaining to the bewildered onlookers that such was the custom in Russia. Into the lives of these suffering people, such astonishment, wonder, and delight entered that night as was the topic of conversation for many and many a day and night to come.

The incredulous reader will exclaim with Fabian in "Twelfth Night":

"If this were played upon a stage now one would condemn it as an improbable fiction."

But my father was like no other man alive. His moods were as violently varied as the wind. His tenderness, his audacity, his agility of mind and body, his elfin spirit of mischief, his pity for the unfortunate, his schoolboy

delight in the strangest of pranks made up a very loveable and unique personality.

In his "Life of E. A. Sothern," Mr. T. Edgar Pemberton relates that on his meeting John McCullough for the first time, McCullough said to him:

"You knew Sothern?"
"Intimately," replied Pemberton.
"Then you loved him," said McCullough.

Now I went away from Boston to travel and play small parts in my father's company. His last season on the stage it proved to be. In a little while he was no more.

It was after my father's death, in 1882, that Mr. Warren's jubilee—his fiftieth year in one theatre—was celebrated with much ceremony. He was now seventy years of age, and Boston paid him a worthy tribute. Then shortly came Mrs. Vincent's turn. Her dear heart was gladdened, too, with the homage of her thousands of friends. Again a little while and her time had come. According to her desire, all her pet birds were buried with her. They were mercifully chloroformed, and she and her parrots and canaries were borne to one grave followed by a sorrowing multitude.

The Vincent Hospital is one of the proudest monuments ever erected to an actor. Here in New England, in Boston, where the prejudice against the playhouse was so powerful that the astute managers had to practically charm the godly into the belief that a theatre was not a theatre; here has been erected by Trinity Church, under the direct, immediate instigation of Bishop Brooks, a noble memorial to a noble woman of the stage. Mrs. Vincent, "the actress," in the very

hotbed of prejudice, by merely living her gentle, kindly, loving existence, had become such a shining light of sweetness and goodliness that with one accord people raised this hospital to her, and here is where a certain good fairy again prevailed. Down Boston's chimney she came and made Boston's duty clear.

The time had come when Mrs. Vincent had moved from Chambers Street to Charles Street. In the opposite house across the road resided one Miss Caroline Staples with her mother. Miss Staples, herself a quaint spinster, regarded Mrs. Vincent, the actress over the way, with vivid and tremulous curiosity. The old player's pilgrimage to Saint Paul's Church on Sundays, where she occupied the same pew for many years; her departure for early rehearsal and for the play each evening, her return about eleven o'clock at night—can one not see the little old-fashioned Puritan, Miss Staples, watching from behind her curtain this denizen of the wicked and forbidden theatre? Did she not wrestle with her own imagination to discover how the dear dumpling of an old lady, fluttering to and from her daily labor, could possibly be a minister of evil? For Mrs. Vincent's comings and goings and the reports of her acting accomplishments all led Miss Staples into a clearer knowledge of plays and players. Mrs. Vincent, too, had observed Miss Staples, but no word had ever been exchanged between the two estimable old gentlewomen. Then Miss Staples's mother died and Mrs. Vincent sent over a card and a note of sympathy, and a mighty friendship resulted. When Mrs. Vincent died, Miss Staples wished to create some memorial to her friend of the playhouse, and consulted the good fairy as to the best way to bestow one thousand dollars to this end. A

small hospital already planned to emerge from a working girls' club might be aided in remembrance of her, and perhaps this modest ward might be christened the "Vincent Hospital." Down to Bishop Brooks sped the fairy. "Would Trinity Church be willing to name its little hospital after an actress?"

"Why not?" said the bishop. "Why not? She was a good woman."

On the wings of love flew the fairy, and gave the consent of Trinity Church to the newspapers. Then, sorely frightened at her own temerity, she began to wave her wand so that the one thousand dollars should become several thousands. A great fair was held in old Horticultural Hall. Mrs. Vincent's collection of fans was mended and patched and exhibited and actually sold—Mrs. Malaprop's fan and Lady Teasle's fan, and Mrs. Vincent's costumes were placed on exhibition. Admission at a dollar a ticket was charged. Thus over four thousand dollars was raised. Mr. Edwin Booth was spoken to, Mr. Jefferson was written to, all sorts of chimneys were adventured, so that shortly when the deacons of Trinity Church gathered to discuss the fact that Trinity Church had sanctioned the naming of a ward after an actress, the solid, illuminating, flaming, persuasive fact stared them in the face that a large sum was at the back of the enterprise already, and that it was determined that not the projected ward only but a hospital should arise to the honor of the dead "play-actress." There was some slight demur. But Bishop Brook's hearty indorsement turned the scale. So the plan was carried through. The Vincent Club was formed, a permanent institution whose members, the smartest young women of the city, devote much time and loving

care to the affairs of the charity. Thus, to-day the affection of a whole community is consolidated into an institution now housed in a new and adequate building which is an honor to them and to the sweet soul they celebrate. "Saint Vincent's" Hospital! What gentler monument could the old actress have desired? Out of her poverty she had all her busy life spared much of her slight substance for those less happy than herself. She was never more than a stock actress on a small salary. Her life had been one of hard work and generous sacrifice. For half a century she had labored and loved. Her one life has done more to break down New England's aversion to the calling of the actor than would the eloquence of a thousand homilies. And one of the sweetest tributes I can pay my father's memory is to recall the fact that Mrs. Vincent was his friend.

Was she not happier and more fortunate than those of us who sail the seven seas in search of the bubble, reputation? Honor, love, obedience, troops of friends, and all that should accompany old age were hers; and after all is said and done, these are the things that are best, for when the curtain falls as winds that blow, into the night go one and all.

# XXVI

# JOHN McCULLOUGH

"A BABBLED o' green fields," whispered Mistress Quickly as Falstaff lay in the adjoining room slowly marching on his final journey. Surely this mountain of flesh saw himself again as a mole-hill and reverted, as all men will, to his earliest days.

It was, I believe, in this mood that, in the last year of his life, my father's thoughts returned to some modest lodgings which he had once occupied in company with two other actors in the small seaport of Yarmouth in England. Many years before Mr. Douglas Stewart, as my father was then called, was a member of the company at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham. The stage-manager and heavy man was one James Crucifix Smith, a broad man blessed with a tall, majestic wife. These two became dear friends of my father, and on certain high-days and holidays they would go to Yarmouth on fishing excursions; occasionally the company might play in Yarmouth and other adjacent towns. These lodgings of which I speak were on a terrace at right angles to the seashore. You stepped out of the front door on to the pebbly beach, on which was a line of fishing-boats drawn up and extending as far along the shore as the eye could reach—weather-beaten, picturesque craft with sails of every hue; and old salts and young salts hard by mending their herring nets, while a scent of seaweed and fish was heavy on the breeze.

In these modest rooms, in days long gone, James Crucifix Smith and my father, mothered and cooked for by Mrs. Smith, had passed some joyful days.

One morning when he was ill and worn after his last season in America, my father said: "Pack up! We are going to Yarmouth to fish." James Crucifix Smith met us at the station on our arrival. I had never seen Smith before. He was as broad as he was long, his countenance beamed as the morning sun and was surely as round. He had the largest coal-black mustache I had ever seen. He was dressed for fishing in a costume which seafaring men don when they encounter typhoons and other devastating storms. The day was fair as an Arcadian song, the sea was like glass. But when Smith fished he meant business. My father, too, had brought an outfit such as men prepare for polar expeditions. I had been on many fishing excursions with him in America—the Rangeley Lakes, Lake Tahoe, the Saint Lawrence River in Canada. A great variety of weapons was always procured—supplies such as arctic and African explorers might require; a literature of fish and fishers, and tackle for leviathan or a minnow. Mrs. Smith was also at the station, a dear, motherly matron; to look at her was to rest secure about dinner.

The station being near the shore, we were soon in the lodgings. Very small they were, but my father was delighted. He was ill and worn out, but he became young again, rushing about the house and recalling the days when these three had lived and laughed and worked and scraped and economized on this very spot. Smith had a boat all ready, with a crew consisting of one boy. Smith had a speaking-trumpet such as admirals use in storms at sea, and with this it was a simple matter to

convey his orders to the crew who stood waiting for them not ten feet from the window.

"We must go fishing at once," said my father while dinner was cooking.

"Of course," said Smith. "I knew you would want to, so I am ready. The boat's ready, the tackle, everything is ready. Ahoy there!" yelled he out of the window and through the speaking-trumpet. "All hands on deck!" and he gave several incredible instructions to the crew which that mariner proceeded to execute.

Soon we were at sea. We fished. I was unutterably seasick; no words can tell how wretched I was; wet through with spray, cold as ice. But Smith and my father were jubilant, and returned to the small lodgings weary with laughter and shouting and heavy with Yarmouth bloaters, mackerel, and codfish.

There was much anecdote that night as we ate Mrs. Smith's leg of mutton in the very small sitting-room. Smith had always played the heavy villains and Mrs. Smith the stately queens. It had been her custom to consign Smith to awful dungeons; to have him hanged, drawn, and quartered; to sentence him to be shot ere dawn. Many times Smith's head had been brought to the block, and the executioner's axe had put an end to deeds too horrible to mention here. Few men had lived so many wicked lives or died so many violent deaths as Smith. Yet there he sat, beaming like the setting sun, his large mustache moving like a wave of the sea as he munched his roast mutton.

A happy week we spent at Yarmouth. But shortly my father began to feel restless. I did not know it then, but his last illness was upon him.

We went back to London where it was arranged that

I should join John McCullough and return with him to America, occupying the captain's cabin on the *Adriatic*, which McCullough and my father had expected to share on the return journey. With much seriousness, McCullough, my father, and I constructed a legal document on half a sheet of note-paper, my first contract for an engagement. I was to receive twenty dollars a week and find my own wardrobe. McCullough made out a list of articles used by noble Romans and others that I should impersonate. My father went with me to the costumer's and ordered the things, with a glittering array of armors, helmets, togas, hauberks, befeathered and bedizened and bewigged, I sailed away to begin acting in earnest. Alas! In one year my father died, in three years more McCullough also had passed away.

John McCullough was a very old friend of my father, who confided me to his care for two reasons. In the first place, my father earnestly hoped that hard work would dishearten me with the theatre, a career for which he was convinced I was totally unfitted; and, secondly, should I determine to continue acting, he believed that a company playing a large repertoire, of what are called legitimate plays, was the best school for a beginner. John McCullough produced thirteen plays the year I was with him—"Othello," "Hamlet," "Merchant of Venice," "Julius Cæsar," "Richard III," "Jack Cade," "Richelieu," "The Lady of Lyons," "Brutus, or the Fall of Tarquin," "Virginius," "The Gladiator," "Damon and Pythias," and "Ingomar." I was given about six parts in each of these plays and some understudies. Most of these parts were flying messengers, one or two lines; leaders of mobs, and such like. Later I was given better parts—Roderigo in "Othello," Lucius in

"Virginius," De Beringhen in "Richelieu," and so forth. At first, however, McCullough carefully observed my father's wishes, and, in order to impress upon me the hopelessness of my expectations as an actor, would, while I was playing a scene with him, comment cheerfully on my efforts, under his breath, as thus: "You're a d——d fine actor, you are." He was quite good-natured about it, and while at first it disconcerted me, I grew accustomed to it, and, indeed, found such candid criticism useful.

We opened the season in Detroit. I had brought from England my large trunk full of beautiful new wardrobe, carefully selected to meet all possible emergencies. In those days, each actor had to provide his own outfit down to the smallest detail. For these thirteen plays no scenery was carried. All productions were made, by the various theatres we played in, out of stock scenery. It was, therefore, much cheaper to play a large and varied repertoire then than it is now, when the actor has to take with him six or seven carloads of scenery and appointments, and when he must provide all costumes for a company of sixty or seventy people.

The costumes of most of the members of the McCullough company had been worn for some seasons, so when I exhibited these beautiful new clothes of mine they excited much admiration in my dressing-room. Men from adjoining rooms were called in to view the nice new garments and the bright shining armor. In about ten minutes most of my things adorned the members of the company, who had seldom appeared to such advantage. I had some misgivings, but a desire to be civil among new acquaintances induced me to let the matter go.

*From a photograph by Sarony*

JOHN McCULLOUGH

After the performance, however, McCullough called everybody on the stage and asked them to take off this, that, or the other—sandals, armor, helmets, togas, and so on. A small heap of my belongings adorned the centre of the stage. "Now," said he, "keep your things to yourself, and remember that in the beginning the tailor makes the man."

I did not play many important parts in that company, but I studied all the plays, heard them spoken each night by very capable people, and always look back on that year as the most valuable training I ever had. The company had worked together for some seasons, so much rehearsing was not necessary. Small accidents, however, would now and then mar a scene, as one night, in the drama of "Damon and Pythias." When we had rehearsed the play during the day, one of the smaller members was ill, so, as he had only two words to speak, a super was put on in his place. In the Senate scene, one of the leading characters has to declare: "I do asseverate it is the vote," and three senators, who are seated at one side of the stage, cry: "And I!" "And I!" "And I!" Myself and another actor were two of these senators, and the super now became the third. We went through the words, we received the cue: "I do asseverate it is the vote." "And I!" said I. "And I!" cried the other. "And *Hi!*" said the super. "No! No!" said Mr. McCullough, "not *Hi;* I! I! Don't pronounce the H like that again!" So again we did it, the poor super very conscious and perturbed. "I do asseverate it is the vote"; "And I!" "And I!" "And Hi!" "Look here, my good man," said McCullough, "you must not pronounce it 'Hi.'" "Hi know, sir," said the super; "Hi know Hi have that difficulty; Hi'm an English-

man. But Hi'm sure Hi can conquer it. Hi'll practise it all day and Hi'll be all right at night." (Fatal faith! How often have we seen it the prologue of disaster!) Well the night arrived. We had all forgotten the episode of the morning in our various preparations. "I do asseverate it is the vote"; "And I!" cried I; "And I!" said the man next to me; "And *me!*" said the super. May he rest in peace, wherever he may be! To me he is immortal.

In the play of "The Gladiator," Spartacus overcomes his opponent in the arena, and, looking up at the spectators, who are on an elevated gallery to the left of the stage, he raises his sword and waits for the signal of "thumbs down" to deliver the coup de grâce. We, in the gallery, would make this gesture, the blow would be given and a fine picture achieved. The men and women in the gallery were composed of about twelve supers and about as many of the minor members of the company. Since only the upper part of the body was visible, the lower part being hidden by the stone parapet of the gallery, we wore our trousers or our skirts, as the case may be, under our togas. One night McCullough fought the great fight, beat his foe to the ground, raised his sword for the signal to slay him. With great gusto we all made the movement. The platform gave way! What had been thumbs down was now feet up. We were, some twenty-four of us, with trousered legs and stockinged legs, male and female, sticking up in the air, uninjured luckily, but humiliated and sheepish as, fallen from our high estate of Roman nobles, we picked ourselves up and trundled off the stage.

When we reached Washington, McCullough one night called me to his dressing-room after the play. In the

room was General Sherman, whom I had met before with my father. I greeted him and was rather surprised when he placed his arm about my shoulders affectionately. McCullough said: "Eddy, I have some bad news for you which I have been holding until after the play," and he handed me a cable despatch, which told of my father's death. The impression made by such news is peculiar. I was greatly astonished at its effect on me. I would have expected, had I ever contemplated the receipt of this announcement, that I should be conscious at once of deep emotion, but such was not the case. I said good night to General Sherman and McCullough and went home to my hotel, next to the National Theatre. I had my supper and went to my room, and still I could feel no overpowering emotion; I suppose I did not realize what had happened to me. I was greatly disturbed at this seeming heartlessness on my part, for I was conscious that I loved my father deeply and that life without him was going to be very empty. I knelt down with an overwhelming sense that something was wrong with me, and that this lack of feeling was unnatural and blameworthy, and I prayed for some light and some understanding, but I received none. I slept well and went about my work the next day. People were sad and sympathetic when they met me, but I was still quite unable to grasp what had happened. That night we played "Richard III." In the second act, the Prince of Wales, the character I was playing, is discovered on a throne, in the centre of the stage, surrounded by his court, Richard III, Lady Anne, and quite a number of people. Richard has murdered the prince's father in the tower. The prince has come to London to be crowned King. The lord mayor comes to welcome him to the

city. Shortly the prince's brother, the Duke of York, enters, and says: "Well, dread my lord, so I must call you now." The prince replies: "Ay, brother, to our grief as it is yours. Too late he died that might have kept that title which by his death hath lost much majesty." As I began the speech I felt the words stick in my throat, and at the word "death" I went all to pieces. I was overcome by the most uncontrollable grief and sobbed aloud. Queen Anne (Miss Kate Forsyth), who was on the stage, and King Richard III (McCullough) came to me; and the others—courtiers, ladies in waiting, men at arms, pages—looked scared and distracted. The audience made no sound; my father's death had been announced in the papers, and they understood. Soon I controlled myself and went on with my part, and with some three or four other parts I had in later scenes of the play.

I went back to England at the end of that season. In 1883 I returned and joined McCullough's company in the middle of the season. He called me to his room one day in Detroit and asked me to write some letters for him. He was thin and looked worried and ill. "There's something the matter with my head," said he, "I can't remember things." The shadow was upon him. The climax came very shortly in Chicago. It had been decided on account of his condition to close the season and disband the company. He had been told of this, but he called a rehearsal. All the members responded. He began to rehearse, to go through one part and then another. He would stop, think a moment, and begin a speech in a different play. It was pitiful. The company, familiar with all his plays, took up the lines wherever he led them. He went through a scene

in "The Gladiator," then he went to the last scene in "Virginius," where Virginius raves after he has killed his daughter. Then to "Othello's" farewell speech, one he had often told me that his great master, Edwin Forrest, had only read to his own satisfaction once in his life:

O now forever farewell the tranquil mind! Farewell, content!
Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars
That make ambition virtue; O farewell!
Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trump!
The spirit-stirring drum; the ear-piercing fife;
The royal banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!
And O, you mortal engines, whose rude throats
The immortal Jove's dread clamors counterfeit,
Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone.

It was pitiful in the extreme to hear McCullough read this at any time, and trebly so now. He wandered through others of his various characters, the people about him weeping and seeking to hide their grief. At length he drifted into the part of Cardinal Richelieu. He played the scene in the garden where Baradas, the creature of the King, comes to take Richelieu's ward away from him. He had spoken the tender speech of protection to Julie, and now Richelieu says to Joseph, who holds him up on one side while his ward assists him on the other: "Well, well, we will go home!" Here he walks feebly up the stage. Baradas, seeing how broken he is, says, aside to De Beringhen: "His mind and life are breaking fast." Richelieu overhears him, turns with his old fury and cries: "Irreverent ribald! If so, beware the falling ruin! I tell thee, scorner of these

whitening hairs, when this snow melteth there shall come a flood. Avaunt! My name is Richelieu! I defy thee! Walk blindfold on—behind thee stalks the headsman—aha! How pale he glares—God save my country!" and he falls fainting as the act ends. Poor McCullough went up the stage at "Well, well, we will go home." Baradas said his line, the tears streaming down his face: "His mind and life are breaking fast." McCullough threw Joseph and Julie off as he turned on Baradas and began, "Irreverent ribald! If so, beware the falling ruin," and stopped dazed. He looked at the weeping Baradas, at Julie sobbing, at the rest of the company standing about overcome with grief and terror, and collapsed utterly. He never played again.

John McCullough was one of the dearest and most beloved actors of his or any other time. In some parts he was magnificent—Virginius, Brutus in "Julius Cæsar," and Brutus in "The Fall of Tarquin," and in Othello he was superb.

It has been my fortune to encounter two rather startling coincidences in connection with the death of Mr. Booth and John McCullough. The night that Edwin Booth died, I was taking supper in the dining-room of the Players Club with three friends. There were no other men in the club. It was about two o'clock in the morning. We, of course, knew that Mr. Booth was ill, but his death was not expected immediately. While we were talking over our meal, suddenly every light in the club went out. My companions began to call for the waiter and to protest loudly. From the darkness right at our elbows, a voice, that of Mr. McGonegal, the manager of the club, said: "Hush! Mr. Booth is dead."

The day Mr. McCullough died I happened to be studying the play of "Cymbeline." I was reading the song in Act II:

> Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
> Nor the furious winter's rages;
> Thou thy worldly task hast done,
> Home art gone and ta'en thy wages;
> Golden lads and girls all must,
> As chimney-sweepers, come to dust—

when a friend of mine opened the door of my room in the Sturtevant House Hotel and said: "McCullough's dead."

## XXVII

# THE NEAR FUTURE

"I AM sorry that I have no position of any importance open at this time," wrote Mr. Daniel Frohman one summer's day in 1883, "but no doubt in the near future I shall be able to offer you and your sister an engagement."

"Man never is but always to be bless'd," and the eternal springs of hope spurted joyfully at this phrase.

"In the near future!" Surely, that must mean next week, at any rate before the month should wane. It would be absurd to imagine that "the near future" could be a year away, that would be far into eternity; say six weeks at the remotest calculation. Then, too, the words, "no position of importance," one could build on that. Leading parts perhaps. Doubtless our appearance had made our capacity evident to even a casual observance. The matter was as good as settled. The future really was secure. All one had to do was to pass the meanwhile with a light heart and to determine calmly and without prejudice what salary one would condescend to accept. One must not undervalue oneself nor make the mistake of holding one's ability cheaply. Mr. Daniel was a business man and naturally would endeavor to make a good bargain, but we owed a duty to ourselves, and although we were prepared to discuss our stipends with civility and even amiably, we, of course, could not put up with any nonsense, and must make it clear that

we were not to be imposed upon, and that even though we were artists we had a keen business sense.

We had seen this actor and that actor whom rumor credited with this or that weekly remuneration, and it was clear as day that our accomplishments were equal, if not superior to theirs. We were modest and unassuming, but even so one must be honest about it, and admit that one's quality is worth such or such a sum.

We would say thus. Mr. Daniel would reply so. To this we would demur in this wise. Mr. Daniel would beat about the bush in such a manner. We would keep to the point and drive him into a corner. He would have to admit the justice of our argument, the propriety of our claim. He would perceive that further remonstrance would be indecorous, even indecent. He would accede to all demands, contracts would be signed with a certain ill-concealed avidity on his part, and with a dignified reserve, a pleasant indifference, on ours. Announcements would be made, success would soon follow, clamor for our services and general acknowledgment of our desert.

By now it is Thursday. The "near future" was, at the latest, on Wednesday. A call at Mr. Daniel's office elicited the statement that at present his ranks were full, but he was delighted to see us, and in the near future he surely would be able to place us to our advantage.

On second thoughts we really could afford to accept a lesser salary than that we had determined on after Mr. Daniel's first assurance, and indeed, it was not necessary when that anticipated conversation should ensue to create an atmosphere of hauteur nor to allow Mr. Daniel to feel that money was the sole object of our negotiations. Perhaps, two-thirds of the amount we

had selected would amply repay us for our labors. On that sum, should he engage us, say, for three years—for we would not tie ourselves up for a longer period—we could take a lease of that small but particular house we had so often coveted. Two servants could take care of it, although certainly one must have a fine cook. Yes, one must not be hard on Mr. Daniel nor force him to pay us more than he can really afford. Some concessions are due to art. One must not be too mercenary. Two-thirds would be satisfactory.

But now this is three weeks later. A little note to Mr. Daniel meets with the charming response that he is so pleased to hear from us, that he bears us in mind, and that doubtless "in the near future" a vacancy will occur in his theatre when he will be delighted to notify us. Really we have been hasty in assuming that two-thirds is actually necessary as a matter of salary. One can live on one-half of that original amount. Certain economies can be practised. One servant besides the excellent cook, and then the place need not be furnished so extravagantly as we had decided it should be. Besides, once we are at work, we shall be so occupied that many expenses we have counted upon we will not have time to indulge in. Perhaps, we had better write Mr. Daniel a line to assure him that one-half the salary we first thought of would allure us. But, on reflection, he has not yet, in so many words, proposed to avail himself of our services.

By this six months have flown by. We meet Mr. Daniel on a street-car.

"Anything doing?" we cry gayly.

"Not now," replies Mr. Daniel, jumping off the car; "something 'in the near future,' perhaps," and he is gone.

Well, really, the house would be an extravagance,

anyhow; one can be perfectly comfortable in a hotel, and if only *one* of us can secure employment we can get along very well; besides, this plan will relieve Mr. Daniel of a great part of that celebrated wage which he will have to pay us. A note sent by messenger suggests to him that, perhaps, he can use my single service in some rôle. Mr. Daniel is delighted to hear from me and hopes I enjoy good health, but just at present all his companies are full; "in the near future," however, an opening will doubtless occur.

But it is nine months since this tantalizing phrase was first projected. Will Mr. Daniel, I wonder, give me the smallest part? Can I coax him to pay me one-twentieth portion of that original sum? Daily I wait on him. Daily he smiles and waves his hand and daily says: "In the near future." I wonder if Mr. Daniel would hire me at any figure at all, or would he, perchance, lend me ten dollars.

"Why," said I to him in after years, "why did you not give me a job when I pestered you so constantly, so persistently, so hungrily?"

"You looked so happy and prosperous," said he, "that I did not think you needed one."

Then I told him how empty my pockets had been, and how I had chewed the cud of that sentence, "in the near future," day in and day out, and how my sister and I had wondered and wondered what day of what week that "near future" would fall on. It could not be far away now. Now it was here, now again it had fled into the void, far, far away.

"You appeared so neat and well-groomed and young and cheerful," said Mr. Daniel, "that I felt sure you were not in need of employment."

"We were dressed up for the occasion," said I, and I recalled how my sister had put on her prettiest frock to call on the manager. No doubt I had given a last glance at myself in the glass; probably we did have a satisfied air. A lean and hungry look might have been more profitable and have brought "the near future" to our door.

It was to the Madison Square Theatre that I went to pester Mr. Frohman for engagements. "Hazel Kirke" was then running on its long career. Here I encountered old Mr. Couldock, one of those venerable ones who had nursed me on his knee, a massive and leonine man, who took his profession very seriously. His part of Dunstan Kirke, the old miller, was a very King Lear, and his performance was superb and terrific. Mr. Couldock had shown much favor to a young man who was making his first experiment in a theatre. It was this youth's business in a certain scene to carry, with two other men, some bags of flour across the stage. The detail of his action Mr. Couldock would constantly discuss with him, so important did he consider it that it should be done in just such a manner. The old gentleman's kindly and constant interest and anxiety encouraged the young man to believe that his career as an actor was dear to Mr. Couldock's heart, and he foresaw himself under the great player's protecting wing borne to the very pinnacle of fortune.

One day, however, the business with the bag of flour went wrong. Intoxicated with Mr. Couldock's encouragement and favor, the wretched novice became lightheaded. He, in a careless moment, dropped the bag of flour onto the stage, and ruined the scene so dear to the old actor's heart. He grovelled with apology, but old Mr. Couldock was strangely amiable.

C. W. COULDOCK

*From a photograph by Sarony*

DANIEL FROHMAN ABOUT 1891

"Come to my room after the play," was all he said, and he actually laughed as he said it, a curious light in his eyes which the young man felt sure was the glow of affection.

"You're a good boy," said the still amiable Dunstan Kirke after the play, as he stood disrobing himself in his dressing-room.

The novice had again protested his sorrow for the accident which had ruined the scene.

"You're a good boy and ought to make a fine actor."

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Couldock," grinned the youth. "I have been longing to ask your advice about going on the stage. I was so frightened you would be angry with me."

"Angry about what?" said old Couldock. "Not at all. How much salary do you get?"

It was in Mr. Couldock's power to recommend an increase of wages, and the pulse of the young man beat high as he said: "Five dollars a week, Mr. Couldock."

"Five dollars a week, eh? And how do you spend it?"

"Spend it, Mr. Couldock?"

"Yes, sir! Spend it. You understand English, don't you? What do you do with it?"

There was a note of impatience in the voice which rather shocked the young hopeful, but he reflected that Mr. Couldock was old and his performance arduous.

"Well, dod gast it! How do you spend it?"

"Well, Mr. Couldock, sir," piped the startled youth, "I pay a dollar a week for my room."

"A dollar for your room, eh? Well, go on! What more?"

"And three dollars for my board."

"Three for your board, that's four. What else?"

"And fifty cents for car-fare and extras."

"Fifty cents for car-fare. Well, go on! That makes four fifty. Well?"

"And twenty-five cents for laundry."

"Four seventy-five. Well, what else? Dod gast it! Hurry up! What more?"

"Well, Mr. Couldock, that's all."

"Then you save twenty-five cents a week?"

"Well, not always, Mr. Couldock; sometimes I save only ten cents."

"Well, dod gast it! Say ten cents, then; that is, you save forty cents a month, eh? Do you, or don't you?"

"Yes, Mr. Couldock, sir, I do."

"And you want to know my advice about going on the stage, eh? Dod gast it!"

"Yes, please, Mr. Couldock."

"Well, I'll tell you. Take your forty cents a month, and save it up until you have three dollars. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, Mr. Couldock, yes, sir!"

"Until you have three dollars, and then buy an axe and cut your dod-gasted head off!"

To me, however, Mr. Couldock was as gentle as a lamb and regaled me with many remembrances of my father and mother in their earlier days. He told me how they, too, had hovered about the threshold of opportunity, and I was able to look back through the years and see them as young as my sister and I then were, waiting for that same "near future" which our lagging steps could by no means overtake, and which seemed forever in the middle of next week. I have always remembered it, and am still waiting for it to turn up.

One is never aware of it until it has melted into the past, and yet there it is again beckoning just ahead of you, full of promises, of dreams come true, of castles builded and of fortunes made.

## XXVIII

# RHYME AND TIME

"Love is a madness," says Rosalind, "and deserves as well a dark house and a whip as madmen do." What is to be said, then, of persons who, not having the excuse of being in love, indulge in the reprehensible conduct common to lovers, who indite verses to fictitious divinities, and venture to rhyme while retaining their reason? If the whip and the dungeon should be the fate of the one, surely the block or the stake should put an end to the other. Therefore, am I a fugitive from justice and, as the criminal is drawn back to the scene of his crime, here am I confessing to once having written a love-song. Still, as a moral hangs thereby, the tale may justify the ditty. The rhyme having been committed, I took it, with some others, to my friend, Walter Slaughter, the leader of the orchestra of the Royalty Theatre, London, where I had an engagement at the time. He had told me that he wanted some lines to set to music.

"Here you are," said I, "I built this song myself."

"'Load,' does not rhyme with 'bowed,'" said Slaughter; "'cloud' would be better."

I wished that I had thought of "cloud" myself, but I had to accept the amendment.

Slaughter came to me a few days after. "I have written some lovely music for your words," said he, "but now I don't like the words, and I want to use the music for something else."

"What's the matter with the words?" said I.

"They seem rather senseless," replied Slaughter.

I was a bit dashed, but I had other troubles just then, so I soon forgot all about my song. As a matter of record, here is the song:

"When cruel Fate or weight of years
The head has lowly bowed,
One mem'ry dries the bitter tears
And lightens sorrow's load.
Oh, sweeter than the twittering song
That summer zephyrs bear,
The sound of one dear word that long
Has lingered in mine ear.
When, in the silent winter night,
The shadows of the firelight
The past express:
'Will you be mine?' again I cry.
Again I hear her soft reply,
My darling: 'Yes.'

"It is the magic word that opes
The cavern of the past,
Recalling youth and love and hopes
Too honey-sweet to last.
Once more her trembling hand I take,
I press her lips once more,
I hear her voice! I start! I wake!
The dear day-dream is o'er.
When I at eve at summertide,
Kneeling, her flowery grave beside,
Cry in distress,
With heavy heart the sad refrain:
'Ah, shall we ever meet again?'
She murmurs: 'Yes.'"

I thought the song rather good and read it frequently. Slaughter was no doubt right about "load" and "bowed,"

but "twittering song" struck me as first-rate. I liked "summer zephyrs" too; "cavern of the past" sounded tip-top, and "magic word" was fine, recalling "sesame" — "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves." It seemed fraught with associations of romance. However, I threw the masterpiece over my shoulder and proceeded.

We were busy at this time rehearsing a play called "Out of the Hunt," by Farnie. Richard Mansfield was cast for a small part. The leading comedian was J. G. Taylor. A number of well-known people were in the cast. We were to open a new theatre in Panton Street, which was not ready, so we were transferred to the Royalty. Mansfield was a young man then, about twenty-four I should say. He was practically unknown. He soon began to shine at rehearsal. His part was that of an old beau. J. G. Taylor was to play a certain waiter. The play was an adaptation from the French; Farnie was the adapter with no pride of authorship, so he allowed Mansfield a good deal of liberty in the way of interpolation and business. Day by day the part of the old beau was built up, especially in Taylor's scenes, until Mansfield's part assumed the proportions of a leading character and Taylor's part, which was the principal comedy part of the play, faded away into the background. We all began to take notice of Mansfield and to perceive that his character was going to be the part of the play.

One day Taylor rebelled. He told Farnie and Alexander Henderson, the manager of the theatre, that he was the leading comedian of the company, and that Mansfield's part had now become the most important personage in the comedy. He protested violently. Farnie was in a dilemma. Mansfield's business and additions

EDWARD H. SOTHERN, 1884

RICHARD MANSFIELD, 1883

were so clever and so valuable that he deserved the prominence accorded to him. Taylor was an important actor, and could not be dispensed with.

Mansfield came forward. "Would Mr. Taylor like my part?" said he.

Taylor felt that, as the principal comedian, the best part belonged properly to him. He ought to have Mansfield's part.

Mansfield handed it to him. "By all means," said he, "here it is," and he handed over the manuscript covered with interpolations, corrections, and business.

We resumed our rehearsals.

"You will allow me," said Mansfield to Farnie, "you will allow me the same privilege with this new part you were so generous as to accord me with the other? Mr. Taylor has the advantage of my suggestions on the other character, you will permit me to do my best with this?"

"By all means," said Farnie, and to work we went again.

Mansfield built up again. Day by day, little by little, his new part absorbed scene after scene. Many of his scenes were with Taylor, and again his part began to excel Taylor's part. In the end Mansfield's performance was the play, as far as the play went, for it was a failure, but his work was remarkable. He played some other smaller parts in that theatre, and then he went to America. I played a few engagements in London and the provinces, and then I followed him. At that time the impression I made was not quite victorious. A critic wrote: "Talent is seldom hereditary, a lamentable instance of this is to be seen at the Royalty."

This was not encouraging and seemed to fulfil my

father's predictions. Still one must live, even if other people do not perceive the necessity. If one has a pain in one place, one always believes one could bear it better if it were in another. So to be "on the go" from where fortune frowns appears to be on the way to where that fickle lady may smile.

I went to New York. I could get no employment. There my resources were at an end, so I wrote a play. Having written my play, I looked for some one to produce it. One day I went into a dramatic agent's office—Mr. Spies on Union Square. He was talking with a Mr. Fort who was manager of the Academy of Music at Baltimore. I heard Fort declare that he must have an attraction at once to play three performances for "The Police Fund Benefit" at Baltimore, in two weeks from that day.

"I will do it," said I.

"Who are you?" asked Fort.

I told him who I was and spoke of my play.

"How much do you want for yourself and play and company for three performances?" said Fort.

I indulged in some rapid arithmetic. "Two hundred dollars," said I.

"I'll give you three hundred," said Fort.

There were seven people in the play. Myself and my sister and my friend, Joseph Haworth, were three. I engaged the other four and started rehearsal.

We went to Baltimore. The theatre was crowded for the benefit performances. The play went like wildfire. I had been my own stage-manager, my own business manager; I had played the leading part and written the play. I now took on myself the office of press agent. I went to the office of the Baltimore *Sun*, and asked to

see the dramatic editor. A large man in shirt-sleeves was pointed out to me.

"Has any one been to the Academy to-night?" I asked him.

"I guess not," said he.

"Will there be a review of the play there?" said I.

"Who are you?" said he.

I told him my name.

"What play is it?" asked the big man.

"'Whose Are They?'" said I.

"Who wrote it?"

"I did."

"Who played the chief part?"

"I did."

"Who's the manager?"

"I am."

"Look here," said he, "since you wrote the play and play the chief part and manage the show, you can write the notice," and that large man motioned me to a chair and to pen, ink, and paper.

Alas! I was too ingenuous. At a later day, would I not have lauded myself to the skies and blown a blast to wake the heavens? Now I blushed and stammered and retreated in confusion. I believe the big man took pity on me, for a review appeared next morning saying the play was one of the wonders of the earth.

Our fame spread to New York, and I received an offer to open at Wallack's Theatre, later the Star. We played there one week and made money; we played a second week and—lost it. We then went to Brooklyn and collapsed. We were done for. However, one John P. Smith, a manager of the day, took up our banner and off we went on a tour the next season. He changed the

title of the play to "Crushed," which proved ominous, for "crushed" we were. We went from bad to worse until we got back to Baltimore. The policemen who acclaimed us so wildly before surely now would rally to our rescue. Not a bit of it. Those policemen avoided us as though we were honest men. Disaster overwhelmed us. We returned to New York. I had not one penny in my pocket. Smith had lost a good deal of money, and I could not ask him for anything. The company left me at the depot. Smith went off in a cab. I stood beside a very large gripsack, literally without one cent in the world. It was Sunday, about eleven o'clock in the morning. Very few people were about in the lower part of New York, for the depot was away down-town then. A young fellow named Armstrong was the only one of the company who stayed behind.

"Are you going up-town?" said he.

"Yes," said I. "I'm waiting for a car. Armstrong," said I, "have you any change?"

"Not a nickel," said Armstrong.

"Then we'll have to walk," said I, "for I have none, either."

We lifted our bags—mine was an awful weight—and up Broadway on that damp, misty Sunday morning we trudged. The tramp was interminable; my bag bothered me so I had to stop and change hands every block. Still I was rather glad Armstrong was there, for misery loves company. We walked to the Sturtevant House on Broadway and 29th Street, where I had always found shelter under the wing of the kindly proprietor, Charles Leland.

Weary and wet and disheartened, without funds and without prospect, I entered the office. Sadly I reflected

that my hair needed cutting; more sadly I reflected that barbers have to be paid for their services. I registered my name at the desk. My old friend, Mr. Scofield, the clerk, handed me a letter with an English postmark. I opened it. It was from Slaughter. Said he: "I enclose a draft for three pounds, your share from the sale of that song of yours."

Who shall say that the muse is ungrateful? Who shall say that the rhymester follows a will-o'-the-wisp? Who shall say that "loves" and "doves" and "hearts" and "darts" and "kisses" and "blisses" are for fools and their follies? Here I had three pounds, the reward of such rhyming!

"Armstrong," said I, "we will have our hair cut!"

We did. I asked Armstrong to breakfast on the American plan. I walked out into the open air a free man once more. Three pounds! The world was mine!

A period of repose was forced upon me, however. I did not find anything to do for about a month; then I joined a company playing the prophetic repertoire of "Called Back" and "Lost." Lost we were and called back we soon became. Cyril Maude, Louis Mann, and other people, now distinguished, were minor members of that company. After much tribulation we landed in Chicago. We played on the North Side and lived at a small hotel called the Sfea House. The company had not been paid for a month, and things looked quite hopeless; still we had no prospects, and the only thing for us to do was to stay on. At this moment I received a telegram from New York offering me an engagement.

On what accidents does our fortune depend? I had heard this play read one day, and had been frank enough to say I did not like it; the other people present offered

perfunctory and insincere or rather polite praise. The author recalled my poor censure and sent for me to play the wicked nobleman in the drama. "Fame awaited me!" "I must be off!" But I had no money. The manager wanted me to stay, for I played a leading part. I declared I would go at once. I telegraphed, accepting the engagement. My friends in the company begged me not to forget them in my good fortune, but to recall their many excellent qualities and their past performances to the various New York managers. This I swore I would do. We sat up late that night, considering how I could possibly escape from Chicago with neither wings nor greenbacks; we were at a deadlock. The manager declared he had no money and that, if I stayed, the coming performances would enable him to pay his people. We knew better. Despair was on the point of gnawing at our hearts when one adorable old woman named Annie Douglas arose and made this memorable remark:

"You must go!" said she, and she led me aside. "I am an old actress," whispered Annie Douglas. "You are young, and you must not miss this chance. I have been in this sort of company before, and I am always prepared."

That adorable woman lifted the hem of her dear old frock and took from her stocking a roll of bills which she proffered to me. What shall be said of her? I proclaimed to the waiting crowd the virtues of this most excellent of comrades. Much embracing followed. Somebody found the wherewithal to toast her. I declined the dear Douglas's proffer. Then I stated my determination. With Napoleonic precision I proceeded to act. I attacked the hotel proprietor in his lair. I arranged to leave my hotel trunk and my two theatre trunks as

hostages to fortune. I received my railway fare and some pocket-money; I called a cab, and amid sorrowing and rejoicing I went my way.

I played in "Favette" and failed. I played in another play, "Mona," with Miss Dauvray, and I met with some success. I was engaged then for Bronson Howard's new play, "One of Our Girls." I was so bad at rehearsal that Frazer Coulter was secured to take my place. Suddenly I began to develop a bit, and was permitted to play the part of Captain Gregory. Fortune favored me in that character, and the sun began to shine.

# XXIX

# MRS. MABBITT

If one may achieve immortality by inditing an essay on roast pig, may another not hope for a laurel leaf by penning some remarks about a cook? The pig cannot be roasted without one to roast it; a roastee demands a roaster, and the excellence of the roast pig depends entirely upon its being not overroasted nor underroasted, but justly roasted. Molière elevated his cook to the rostrum of the critic; a very proper proceeding, for the critic should be able to cook your goose for you in more senses than one. The ultimate object of labor is food; nothing can be successfully accomplished on an empty stomach. One must work to eat, one must eat to work. "Let who will make the laws so I may make the songs." But the songs cannot be made by empty men. No supper, no song is as imperative as "no song, no supper." No man should make a god of his stomach, but he may be pardoned if he makes a goddess of his cook.

When I first started housekeeping in New York, I acquired a flat in Washington Square, and I invited my brother Sam to come from England to live with me. Having purchased my pots and pans, I bethought me of a cook, and confided to my brother my various hopes and fears on the weighty matter. My brother is a man of quick resolves. I was not surprised to receive a cable from him which said: "Will arrive June 3, with cook."

The cook's name was Mrs. Mabbitt. She had kept house for my brother in his bachelor chambers in London, and, with his assistance, had, from the humble position of charwoman, climbed to the lofty pinnacle of cook. Day by day, week by week, month by month, she and he had culled from London *Truth*, *The World*, and other weekly papers devoted to culinary study such kitchen lore as would turn sow's ears into silk purses, or make soup out of sawdust. We lived in clover!

Alas! we player-folk are birds of passage, here to-day and gone to-morrow. Soon I had to go on my tour of the country. One cannot dismiss one's cook and have her, too; so I installed Mrs. Mabbitt in my apartment and went my way. Now Mrs. Mabbitt was no ordinary woman. She was rather small but of vast dignity in a quiet way, precise of speech, jet-black hair which she dressed in a very old-fashioned style with six small ringlets falling down on each side of her face; a lace cap on her head, mittens on her hands, and a manner that put people in their places at once. She suffered greatly from rheumatism, was indeed a martyr to it; but proceeded with great fortitude to lift heavy utensils, and to mix and fix and sort and sift, as was her nature to. While I was away for about six months, Mrs. Mabbitt resided in solitary state in my superior new apartment. The rumor became rife in the neighborhood that she was a wealthy English lady, some even said a person of title. Her rheumatic tendency increased apace. My physician, who attended her, declared that she must be out in the air for an hour or two each day. Walking was difficult for Mrs. Mabbitt, so I wrote to an old coachman, an ancient friend of mine, and bade him call for Mrs. Mabbitt two or three times a week and take her

for an outing in the park. These excursions established rumor more firmly in the conclusion that Mrs. Mabbitt was a person of distinction.

At length, the season over, my brother and I returned and Mrs. Mabbitt resumed her cooking. In these days her duties and her growing infirmity gave her little time and less inclination to take the air. At last I had to insist on her going out with my coachman friend. My brother objected that the large carriage, and the two prancing steeds, created too much stir for one's cook, and bewailed this state of affairs to my physician. "I can't see any harm in it," said that scientist, "so long as your brother does not go with her."

The time came, however, when Mrs. Mabbitt flatly refused to go alone or to go at all. I saw myself faced with the alternative of either losing my cook from inanition and lack of fresh air, or of having to take her out driving myself. I chose the latter course and might be seen some fine days prancing through the Park with a distinguished old lady by my side balancing an antediluvian bonnet on her head and early Victorian ringlets shading her cheeks. Our conversation was limited but instructive and culinary.

I had plenty to think about and needed the fresh air myself, so I killed two birds with one stone. My brother was much disturbed and protested that the proceedings were unusual! However, I had read, and did daily read, much tearful talk about the servant question, and I congratulated myself that I knew how to catch a cook and keep her, too. It is just to this pinnacle of self-adulation that fortune delights to lead a man in order to dash him down. Mrs. Mabbitt was a woman of sixty-five. She was a spinster, calling herself Mrs. out of some

mistaken idea that the married state is more cook-like and secure. At the precise moment when I was assured that my fortifications surrounded Mrs. Mabbitt, and hemmed her in, when I was convinced that all the ties of interest and affection, and the considerations of age and fortune had riveted her to me with hooks of steel, she eloped, ran away, fled, with the youthful grocer-boy who peddled groceries to us in Washington Square!

A brief note announced the tragedy. She had gone to California. The grocer-boy was twenty-four, Mrs. Mabbitt was sixty-five. We, my brother and I, were crushed. The coachman friend came that morning to take Mrs. Mabbitt for her drive, but instead conducted my brother and myself to our club, where, with gloomy countenances, we contemplated our breakfast.

For a while our establishment languished while we picked up food here and there. We tried cooks of sundry colors, but they came and cooked and went away. They could not and would not fall into the Mabbitt manner, and any other manner to us was useless and abhorrent. Thus our cookless existence meandered on for a melancholy and never-to-be-forgotten month, when one day we received a telegram from a Far Western town which said: "Husband has deserted me, please send railway fare to get home."

Oh, idiotic grocer-boy! To have found this pearl of women and to prove so much a swine! This treasure, kings might envy, to grasp and cast away! This flower of cooks! This paragon of roasters, of broilers, of fricas-see-makers! This queen of pudding-mixers!

Well, back came Mrs. Mabbitt, but no more the same. She had aged ten years. We asked for no confidences, but gladly took her to our hearts. Yet she insisted on

telling all the circumstances of her poor courtship and her pitiful betrayal. The grocer-boy had heard the stories of her high degree, of her wealth, of her noble lineage, and had thought, despite her denials, that he was marrying at least into the peerage. The poor woman had no money, having sent all she earned each week to her relatives abroad. The heartless cheesemonger had borrowed her last wages to buy the tickets out West, swearing that he loved her for herself alone. One week of illusion and he had demanded more coin, then the bubble burst.

For a little while Mrs. Mabbitt struggled to get back to her old duties, but it was useless; she soon collapsed, her rheumatic ailment conquering her strength. We placed her in an ancient ladies' home; there she lingered a while, and passed away.

The grocer-boy, I pray Heaven, is gone—not where people cook, but where they are cooked!

There is a churchyard in an English village where some grateful poet thus pays tribute to one of Mrs. Mabbitt's quality:

"Here lies Moll Britt, who cooked such meals
As took the devil by the heels;
You simply couldn't be a sinner
If old Moll Britt had cooked your dinner.
She'd roast a joint six times in seven
'Twould make you think you were in Heaven.
Let's hope she tends the kitchen fire
Where good cooks feed the angel choir."

What fitter epitaph for Mrs. Mabbitt?

It is frequently the case that professors view the world as it wags from the point of view of their own specialty. A friend of mine who purveys ancient and decrepit

anecdotes tells me frequently that Mr. Clarkson, the wig-maker, on being asked his opinion of a great Shakespearian production, declared it to be superb. "You couldn't see a join," said he, meaning thereby that the line where the wigs of the actors joined their foreheads was invisible.

My friend also assures me that a certain clog-dancer on witnessing Charles Coghlan play Othello remarked: "Oh, yes, Charley Coghlan he's all right, but give Charley Coghlan a breakdown and where is he?"

Mrs. Mabbitt was no less absorbed in her art. She perceived life through the medium of a saucepan and noted mankind by the lore of the cook-book.

Sometimes I would lure Mrs. Mabbitt to the theatre to see me play. Holding her in reverence as I did, I was usually eager to know how she liked what I had done. The first play of mine that she saw had a breakfast scene in the first act, and when I approached Mrs. Mabbitt for her opinion, she said merely: "Well, sir, I'm glad I didn't cook *that* breakfast." The rest of the play seemed to have escaped her notice.

On another occasion there was a small mention in the comedy of household bills, but all the comment we could extract from Mrs. Mabbitt concerning a tragic love-tale and much excellent comedy was: "Well that butcher *was* a cheat and no mistake." The pangs of the lovers, the labors of the comedians, my own desperate efforts to please might as well never have been, so far as Mrs. Mabbitt was concerned.

Of course it is this concentration on one idea that makes great people. The small man scatters his energies; the great man does one thing better than the rest of mankind. To Mrs. Mabbitt man was hungry or re-

plenished; things were cooked or uncooked, good to eat or not good to eat, well done or underdone. The whirligig of time and fortune concerned her not. That fate is a fiddler, life a dance, disturbed not the precision and perfection of her recipes. Her creed was "Love and honor thy cook that thy days may be long in the land," and her motto was, "Dinner's ready."

## XXX

# WHY!

THAT curious perversity which demands that we shall impress our particular convictions upon each and every one of our acquaintance was no doubt implanted in our nature with most wise intent. Through this force has knowledge prevailed, for each new assertion has provoked not only argument, but opposition in the course of which error has been laid bare and truth has been established.

The most ordinary experience will recall occasions when we, or another thus afflicted, have felt impelled as by a resistless power to insist upon some quite unimportant opinion and, heedless of evidence, of rebuff, and of disinclination to pursue the subject on the part of our opponent, we have driven him from indifference to conflict and from conflict to anger, and finally have denounced him for his obstinacy if we have not reflected on his honesty.

"Ta," subsequently "Daddles" and eventually "Sam," with that truly supernatural wisdom for which he has been conspicuous, early discovered a means of overwhelming such disturbers of the peace, a knowledge so serviceable to the sanity of mankind as to be worthy of record.

Like most great discoveries, the thing is so simple that when made manifest one is astonished that one never thought of it oneself.

The method consists of two parts:

*A.* The constant repetition after each assertion of the one word, "Why?"

This leads the foe to exhaust himself in reckless and self-destroying exposition, explanation, and confusion.

*B.* The steady, ceaseless, cold-blooded, remorseless insistence upon one statement, unaccompanied by comment and injected into the enemy's remarks with extreme cunning and persistency just at the moment when he considers himself victorious. Said a fellow traveller to Sam one day:

"The manners of the English people are inferior to the manners of the Americans."

"Why?" said Sam.

The victim proceeded to declare that that reserve for which Englishmen are said to be noted was in reality founded upon self-esteem, which was a quality offensive in itself and which caused those with whom they came in contact to feel aggrieved at an affectation of supreme excellence.

"Why?" said Sam.

"Well," continued the unsuspecting one, "you must admit that Englishmen as a class assume an air of superiority."

"Why?" inquired Sam.

"Because they think they *are* superior," said the enemy, waxing hot. "They seem to regard themselves as the lords of creation."

"Why?" murmured Sam.

"That's just the annoying part of it!" cried the man of opinions. "There is no reason for such a pose. Your Englishman simply takes it for granted that you are an ass, and that he is not."

*From a painting by Cecil Clark Davis*

SAM SOTHERN, 1916

"Why?" said Sam.

"Because he is so infernally obtuse that he cannot see beyond the end of his own nose!" exclaimed the man, roused by now to a pitch of indignation and scarcely able to articulate with intelligence. "I tell you it won't do! People won't stand for it."

"Why?" said Sam.

"They don't have to!" exploded the man. "In this country all men are equal, and I want you to understand that I am as good as the next man."

"Why?" said Sam.

"Because this is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people."

"Why?" said Sam again.

"We fought for it! We bled for it! We died for it!" cried the man, "and no man alive shall say to me that I am not the equal of any man on God's footstool."

"Why?" said Sam.

"The Constitution declares it!" cried the man. "The Fourth of July announces it! and I say that no man can tell me that I—I would like to hear any man say—Fetch me the man who will——!"

Sam now brought into play plan *B*, which has the effect of changing the train of thought, but still keeps the antagonist occupied to his undoing.

"The best fishing is in the Thames!" said Sam.

The man looked stunned at this sudden turn of events.

"What's that?" said he.

"The best fishing," said Sam, "is in the Thames."

"The Thames isn't big enough to hold a fish," said the man with a fine scorn. "Why, there's a creek near my home which would hold all the fish in England. Did you ever hear of the Hudson River?"

"The best fishing is in the Thames," repeated Sam.

"Look here," said the man, "I'll take you for some tarpon-fishing in Florida. You don't know what a fish is until you hook a tarpon."

"The best fishing is in the Thames," sighed Sam, as though the man's ignorance was becoming a trifle wearisome.

"The Thames nothing!" said the man. "The Thames isn't a river at all! It's a leak in the ground. Look here," and he leaned over and placed his hands on Sam's knees, "I'll take you up to the Saint Lawrence River and show you some salmon. When you have had a forty-pound salmon on a fly-rod——"

Sam removed the man's hands from his knees with much gentleness and dusted his trousers carefully.

"The best fishing is in the Thames," said he.

"Why, just off little old New York," said the man, "I will show you some sea-bass that will make your hair gray. Say!" said he, becoming sarcastic, "did you ever see a fish outside of a sardine tin? Why, I've watched the people in London fishing in the round pond in Kensington Gardens catching little minnows and putting them in a pickle bottle. At it all day long. That's your English fishing. The only decent fishing in Europe is in Norway. Any man who knows anything about fishing will tell you that. You may catch a brook-trout once in a while in Scotland, and they tell me a man once hooked a salmon in the Tyne. I believe there was a time when you could catch codfish in the Channel, and there are bloaters at Yarmouth. But I'm talking about sport. Understand me, I'm a fisherman; I have fished all over the world, and I know what fish is. I can cast a fly five hundred yards, and light on a ten-cent piece. I began to fish

before you were born, and I'll guarantee to show you more fish in half an hour than you can find in England in six years."

Here the man paused and looked about him. It truly seemed that he had talked down all opposition. There was a pause.

Sam smoked sadly for a few moments.

"I guess when we talk fish I'm all there," said the man, and he rose and put on his hat.

Sam blew some smoke at the ceiling.

"The best fishing is in the Thames," said he.

The man sat down again, his countenance working spasmodically. He made one or two efforts to speak. At length he cried out:

"Have you ever shot a moose?"

Sam smoked in silence.

"Ah! I thought not," said the man. "Nor a wild-cat, eh? Nor a buffalo, nor yet a grizzly bear? They don't have them things in England, do they?"

"The best fishing is in the Thames," said Sam.

The eyes of the man became bloodshot, his breath came and went quickly, his hands twitched, he spoke with much effort.

"Well, I *have!*" he said hoarsely. "I have hunted in the Rockies, and I have fought a black bear with my two hands and won out. How's that for high—?" said he. "That's going some, I take it."

"The best fishing is in the Thames," said Sam.

"By the great God!" said the sportsman, "I say and I don't care who knows it, that this country beats the world when it comes to big game. I'd like to see the man who will say 'no' to that. I'll bet my boots that I'll show you more real sport in a fortnight than you can

see in Europe if you live to be as old as Methuselah!" and he smacked his knee a great smack and dashed his cigar onto the floor. He kicked his chair vehemently and shook a large finger in Sam's eye. "And don't you forget it!" said he.

Sam gazed at him as though he were a great distance away.

"Huh!" said the man, and, going to the door, he looked back in triumph.

"The best fishing is in the Thames," said Sam.

The man tried to speak, but he found no words. His mouth opened and shut, he swallowed with difficulty and rushed from the room.

"The best fishing is in the Thames," said Sam.

Let it not be thought that Sam made this statement without due regard for veracity. To go a-fishing is not of necessity to catch fish, nor is the catching of fish the only pleasure in fishing; else would the toilers in fishing-fleets exist in a very paradise piscatorial.

No, the true joy of fishing consists, as does all other true joy, in anticipation. The struggle of the finny victim over and the prey landed, a kind of sorrow pervades the gentle angler. The hours of preparation, the search for the early worm, the skilful manufacture of the exquisite fly, the patient waiting accompanied by contemplation, the murmurs of summer, and the whisper of the stream—to these the bloody business of fish-catching is subservient.

So when Sam declared that the best fishing was in the Thames, he meant that the Thames, for him, was the best place wherein to fish; that is, to go a-fishing. Like many another Thames fisherman, he would consider one fish in a week a sufficient reward.

It was observed on one occasion, when a river-party had enjoyed some days of boating, punting, and so forth, that Sam, accompanied by a very pretty damsel, sat, with admirable tenacity, in a punt, casting his line patiently hour after hour. No bite responded to his blandishments, and day in and day out to inquiries he would smilingly reply:

"No, not a bite."

It was noticed that neither he nor his lovely companion ever indulged in conversation. She looked at Sam; Sam looked at the river. The river whispered; the sun smiled; the rain fell; silence reigned.

"Why do you take that girl out with you?" said a friend. "We all think she is so stupid; she never opens her lips."

"That's just it," replied Sam. "She's so pretty to look at, and she does not disturb the fish."

"But there are no fish," said the friend.

"No," said Sam, "but that doesn't interfere with the fishing."

## XXXI

# THE OLD LYCEUM THEATRE

"WHERE are they gone, the old familiar faces?" The Lyceum Theatre, on Fourth Avenue opposite the Ashland House, is now but a memory. For sixteen years it was my home actually, for I lived there constantly in spirit—even when I was away, ever contemplating what I would produce there on my return. For sixteen years I brought out there a new play each summer under the direction of my guide, philosopher, and friend, Daniel Frohman. I grew there from boyhood to manhood. There I made many of my closest friendships, and there most of the comedy, farce, and tragedy of my existence had its genesis in the real and in the mimic world. I was twenty-three when I began to play there; I was thirty-nine when I left there, never to return. I watched the theatre building, wondering whether I should ever act in it; I watched it being pulled down by a wrecking concern, sad that I should never play in it again.

"Where are they gone, the old familiar faces?" In front of the house and behind the curtain, Time has been busy with his scythe. In sixteen years, Death has had time to gather a heavy harvest.

In 1885, therefore, it was with much acceleration of my pulse that one evening, coming out of my modest lodging, I saw right before my eyes my own name in letters six feet high. I was a star! I had, so to speak, blossomed during the night. While I slept, the bill-

board man, with paste and broom, had labelled me as "valuable goods. Fragile! This side up with care." I stood before these giant letters and reflected upon the power of print and the bubble-like quality of reputation. Then I wended my way to Daniel Frohman and said: "The letters are too big; I can never live up to them."

Managers are optimistic. "We will try," said he.

I had been two years at the Lyceum Theatre in the company of Miss Helen Dauvray. Fortune and Miss Dauvray had been kind to me. I had proceeded toward a modest success. My brother Sam had joined me in America, having just finished his schooling in Paris. He brought with him two dogs: Death, a bulldog, and Trap, a fox-terrier. One day I brought to my rooms in 23d Street a box of old manuscripts, mostly copies of "Lord Dundreary," and others of my father's repertoire. Death and Trap and Sam stood by and looked on idly while I, as idly, looked over the plays. Suddenly Trap flew at a heap of manuscripts and seized a printed book. We tried to get it from him. He dashed about the room, as fox-terriers will, under the bed and over the bed, waiting, watching, fleeing. Death, an unwieldy fellow, began to take notice and amble after us as we pursued Trap. My landlady opened the door. Out went Trap, Death after him, nearly upsetting my landlady. My brother and I rushed after the dogs. Trap headed down 23d Street direct to the Lyceum Theatre, play in mouth. In and out of cabs and cars, pedestrians and jehus, that wonderful dog went directly to the box-office of the theatre.

Frank Bunce, the business manager, beheld him. "What has he got there?" said he.

"A play," said I.

"Does he want me to read it?" said Bunce.

"If you please," I replied.

"Take it up-stairs to Mr. Frohman," said the business manager.

'Twas done. Frohman read it. He accepted it and produced it. The play had been written twenty years before for my father by Madison Morton and Robert Reece. They called it "Trade." Frohman christened it "The Highest Bidder." The hero was an auctioneer who fell in love with the daughter of a haughty baronet; hence the conflict between trade and birth. The play was a great success and started both Dan Frohman and myself on the waters of prosperity. "Out of the mouths of dogs cometh wisdom!"

The structure and the dialogue of "Trade" was rather old-fashioned and stilted. David Belasco, the stage-manager of the Lyceum, took it in hand to doctor it and produce it. Belasco and I worked with the fervor and enthusiasm of youth. We both enjoyed our work; we were both indefatigable. A great deal of the dialogue I wrote myself as the days of rehearsal went by. I was allowed great liberty in that respect. LeMoyne and the other actors were good comrades, and all went as happily as could be. We all fancied we were rather clever, when one day Mr. Frohman came to see how we were getting on. The very fires of enthusiasm consumed us; we stood panting and exhausted before our manager, strong in the consciousness of work well done.

"Awful!" said he. "It is simply awful! The thing will be a shocking failure!"

Printing six feet high! Much talk about the coming début of a new star; much affectionate reminis-

cence in generously inclined newspapers of that new star's old father. "These things have to be lived up to. At it again!" Sam and I and the two dogs and Belasco and our sympathetic crew; day and night did we rehearse and write and discuss. One scene, the crucial scene of the play, concerned an auction of the proud father's estate. The hero, the despised auctioneer, buys in the property through an agent who bids on the stage. "Going! going! gone!" cries the hero in the auctioneer's box.

"Who has bought the Larches?" weeps the heroine.

"I!" says the hero.

Consternation! Victory! Defeat of the villain! End of the act!

This scene was very intricate and what we call "liney"; twelve or fourteen different people had to talk constantly in it; extra people had to shout on exact cues approval or disapproval, the thing had to go like clockwork. The man working it out might see his way to some successful consummation, but to an onlooker, what with interruptions, repetitions, pauses to write things down or argue about them, the prospect must have been hopeless, and the future black with disaster. Since Mr. Frohman had said "Awful!" we had worked like so many devils. I had rewritten many scenes, especially had I labored at the auction scene. So much had it been changed and added to that when the dress rehearsal came I had to read the scene from my pages of manuscript placed among papers on my auctioneer's desk. I had to pretend to drink champagne during this scene. Refreshments are being handed about at this particular auction; my clerk, observing my distraction and grief, plies me with glasses of wine. I insisted on having real cham-

pagne, so that we would get the real "pop" when the cork was knocked out. This pleased the rest of the cast; at the dress rehearsal the scene was played with enthusiasm. All the characters and the extra people, the stage-hands, the scene-painter, the stage-manager, when Jack Hammerton said "I!" felt we had earned each other's esteem and admiration. The third and last act was rehearsed. This consisted chiefly of love-scenes between the bashful hero and the lovely heroine. "'Tis love that makes the world go round," said I to myself. These scenes, since there were no lovers in front to experience the gentle throes and share the sweet madness, went sadly enough at this dress rehearsal. When all was said and done and Jack Hammerton had won the heroine, had bestowed his first kiss upon her pouting lips, we stood once more expectant of approval. Mr. Frohman came down the aisle of the theatre to the footlights. There stood the sweet sweetheart of the play; there the delightful old comedy friend, LeMoyne; there the enthusiastic and conquering hero; there the gratified stage-manager, Belasco.

"Well," said I, my bosom swelling with certain confidence that the six-foot printing was not all in vain—"well, how now? What do you think now?"

"Awful!" said Frohman. "It will be a frightful failure!"

Belle Archer, the heroine, faded away in tears; Archer, her husband in real life, and the wicked baronet of the play, muttered as only wicked baronets can; LeMoyne began to talk about the palmy days of the drama; Belasco alluded to the marvellous climate of California. For one moment my heart sank within me. Mr. Frohman was retreating up the aisle. He saw his first production

*From photograph in the collection of Ezert Jansen Wendell*

"Going!" "Going!!" "Gone!!!"

E. H. SOTHERN AS JACK HAMMERTON IN "THE HIGHEST BIDDER"

in his new theatre a fiasco. Let us respect his reflections and draw a curtain over his grief.

I was up with the lark. "Trap," said I, as that restless fox-terrier jumped onto my bed—"Trap," said I, "you selected this play."

"Bow-wow!" said that animal with extreme confidence.

"Boo-hoo!" boomed Death, the bulldog, in a deeper note, as who should say: "Me too!"

This was inspiring. Up and out and to it again! Some few final touches, some few words of advice, and some parting instructions on the eve of battle, and we were in for it.

The night was upon us. There we were playing the play. The audience was kind and generous. The first act, however, went quietly. The exposition was a bit long, but one amusing scene at a breakfast-table excited much laughter, thanks greatly to the excellent comedy of Mr. LeMoyne. The curtain went down to one call.

Where was Mr. Frohman? He did not come behind with encouragement or advice. We knew not then, but afterward we knew. He had seen part of the first act, and had left the theatre in despair. He had gone to the Ashland House across the way. There on this hot summer night, the windows in front of the theatre being open, he could actually hear the actors speaking on the stage; he could hear the audience laugh and applaud whenever they were so inclined. There he sat on one of those well-remembered rush-bottom chairs, the picture of wretchedness, Bunce, the business manager of the theatre, on a chair beside him, glum, silent, pale, desperate. These two, who saw the fortunes of the theatre blasted, sat

with lips compressed and chairs tilted back like men whose doom was sealed.

"What's that?" cried Frohman.

"My God! The theatre's on fire!" cried Bunce.

They rushed across the street. The place was in an uproar. Up the stairs on either side of the lobby they sped, followed by the police and several old patrons of the hotel across the way. Passers-by stopped and stared. Some one cried: "Sound the fire-alarm!" In the theatre the audience rocked and roared with applause. Shouts of victory resounded in the air. Up went the curtain again, and again, and yet again. There was Jack Hammerton in the auctioneer's box, a bottle of champagne in one hand, a glass in the other, his hair on end and wet with perspiration, his collar wilted and burst from his collar button, his waistcoat undone, gesticulating hysterically as picture after picture came and went again. Five calls, six calls, seven! eight! nine! ten!

"Ten calls! What's the matter with Sothern?" whispered Bunce.

"It's that champagne! I knew it was a mistake!" said Frohman.

But it wasn't the champagne at all. We had lived up to the printing—at least we thought we had. The last act went finely. Frohman beamed like the morning sun; the lovers loved like Love himself; the audience played its part and all went merry as a marriage bell. "The Highest Bidder" was a fine success. We began at once to consider our next play.

An interviewer was asking me one day for a record of my modest achievements. Said I: "Any distinction to which I may lay claim is not connected with the theatre. Acting is a side issue with me. My chief ac-

LYCEUM THEATRE,

DANIEL FROHMAN, · SOLE MANAGER.

TUESDAY EVENING, JUNE 21, AT 8:30.

Mr Frohman presents this Souvenir in Commemoration
—OF THE—
50th PERFORMANCE
—OF—

# THE HIGHEST BIDDER,

A Comedy in Three Acts, by Maddison Morton and Robert Reece.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

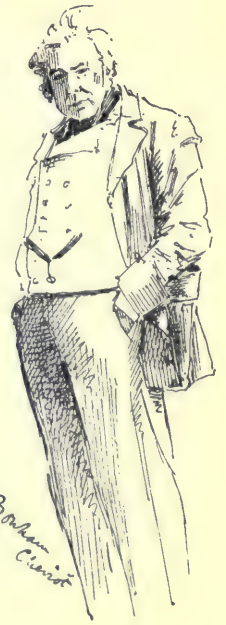
| | |
|---|---|
| LAWRENCE THORNHILL, of "The Larches," | H. B. Pyatt. |
| BONHAM CHEVIOT, of "The Firs," his neighbor, | Wm. J. LeMoyne. |
| SIR MUFFIN STRUGGLES, A Philanthropist, | Cameron Matheson |
| SIR EVELYN GRAINE, Baronet, Etc., | Herbert Archer. |
| JOSEPH, Servant to Thornhill, | |
| PARKYN, | |
| FRANK WIGGINS, | |
| SERGEANT DOWNEY, | |
| BILL, His Assistant, | |
| ROSE THORNHILL, | Belle Archer |
| MRS. HONITON LACY, | |
| LOUISA, Her Daughter, | |
| JACK HAMMERTON, of Hammerton, Mallet & Co., London, | E. H. Sothern. |

ACT I.—Breakfast Room of The Larches, . . . "The Bidder."
ACT II.—Showroom at Hammertons, Mallet & Co.'s, London, . . . "The High Bidder."
ACT III.—Scene 1. Exterior of The Larches, "Sunset."
Scene 2.—The Glade, "Twilight."
Scene 3.—Same as Scene 1. "Moonlight," . . . "The Highest Bidder."

The Play edited by and under the Stage Direction of Mr. BELLASCO

DAVID BELASCO Stage Manager — W. BELLASCO, Asst. Stage Manager — FRANK D. BOYD, Treas.
GEO. SELIG, Asst. Treas — E. G. GRIFFIN, Scenic Artist — EDGAR ALLEN Leader
THOS. GOODWIN, Machinist.

Cast of characters from the souvenir programme on commemoration of the fiftieth performance of "The Highest Bidder."




Sketches by E. H. Sothern
"He did as do it very well—he did it"

FACSIMILE OF PAGES FROM SOUVENIR PROGRAMME OF "THE HIGHEST BIDDER"

complishment in days to come will be admitted to lie in the realms of invention. I am an inventor."

"What did you invent?" said the surprised scribe.

"The London messenger-boy," I replied. "It is entirely owing to my enterprise that messenger-boys exist in London."

I proceeded to enlighten my interlocutor: "When my little play, 'The Highest Bidder,' had achieved the distinction of a fifty-night run in New York during the summer of 1885, Mr. Dan Frohman and I, in the pride and enthusiasm of victory, got up a souvenir to celebrate the occasion. I made some little pen-and-ink sketches of the characters, of which sketches I was extremely proud. I said to my brother Sam one morning: 'I think we ought to send some of these souvenirs to the authors of the play.' The piece had been written for my father twenty years before by two popular writers of the day, Madison Morton and Robert Reece. Morton was a most prolific writer of farces, 'Box and Cox' being, perhaps, his most famous one; and Robert Reece had for years and years written the burlesques for the Gaiety Theatre, London. At this time, Reece was an old man, an inmate of the Charter House in London. The Charter House is a hospital and school founded in 1611 by Sir Thomas Sutton. It was originally a Carthusian monastery established in 1371. It is an asylum for poor brethren the number of whom is limited to eighty, and they must be bachelors, members of the Church of England, and fifty years old. Each brother receives, besides food and lodging, an allowance of twenty-six pounds a year for his clothing, et cetera. Neither Reece nor Morton had ever expected to hear again of their play, 'Trade,' which they had sold to my father twenty years gone by, and I

thought it would please them to know that, at last, it had been played and had met with success. 'We must send them some of these souvenirs,' said I. 'How shall we do it?'

"'Send a messenger-boy,' said my brother.

"I have before remarked on the astonishing acumen and the strange ability to see through millstones possessed by my brother. The idea immediately struck me as not only feasible but capable of vast advertising possibilities. In those days, thirty years ago, it was still something of an adventure to cross the Atlantic. I had, myself, only recently been interviewed because I had gone to London and back within twenty days. To-day this is, of course, commonplace.

"We rang the messenger call. A very small boy responded. Said I: 'I want you to take this package and these two letters to Mr. Robert Reece at the Charter House, London, England.'

"'Yes, sir,' said the boy without exhibiting the slightest surprise. He took the package and the letters and went away.

"'A remarkable boy!' said I.

"'American,' said my brother.

"We went over to Mr. Frohman, and told him of our plan. He was enthusiastic. The head man from the messenger office came over to the Lyceum Theatre; this was a matter of more than fifteen cents. Arrangements were made through the office of the Edwin H. Low Steamship Agency. A ship sailed the next morning and our messenger-boy, named Eugene B. Sanger, in a new uniform, and looking as though taking letters to Europe were his daily duty, went his way.

"Up to the time of Sanger's arrival in London no mes-

*From a photograph taken in London with the "Buffalo Bill" Company*

EUGENE B. SANGER, MESSENGER BOY

Sanger was sent to London to distribute souvenirs of "The Highest Bidder"

senger service existed; any one who wished to send a message, either sent it by a cab or called for a commissionnaire—that is, an old soldier disabled from active service, retired on a pension, and whose progress as a Mercury was aided by the loss of one arm or one leg. There was a commissionnaire's office where one could obtain the service of one of these veterans to perform many and various duties; as a rule you sent a commissionnaire in a cab! Sanger's visit was, for our purposes of advertising, made as public as possible. Buffalo Bill was at that time giving an exhibition at Earls Court; to him also was a souvenir sent, and we soon received a photograph of our boy surrounded by Buffalo Bill's Indians, cowboys, and other Wild West citizens. Sanger's mission to Morton and Reece was discussed in the *Daily Telegraph* and other papers. Then a correspondence ensued as to the messenger service in America; Sanger was interviewed and discussed learnedly upon his profession. Much argument to and fro resulted. His comings and goings were chronicled, and the establishment of a messenger service was discussed and advocated. Not long afterward it was actually instituted, and, as all the world knows, you can call a messenger-boy in London to-day with the same facility that you can call one in New York. Ten years later, in 1895, Mr. Richard Harding Davis sent his messenger-boy 'Jaggers' from London to New York, thereby availing himself of the service which my brother's suggestion had established.

"This, I declare, is a sufficient claim to immortality; here is a useful and really necessary concomitant of daily existence, which brings ease and peace and comfort to thousands of people, which facilitates intercourse in all

business and pleasure—a long-felt want supplied! And who did this thing? To whom is glory due?

"To me! From the housetops I cry it! I did it—Sam and I.

"Sanger's visit was a triumphal progress. On land and sea he was petted and entertained, as though he had been a messenger from Mars. He gave up being a messenger-boy and went on the stage; became an actor, a writer, a manager, a man of letters in more senses than one."

Said I to my newspaper friend: "Here's a service which should arouse the gratitude of mankind, and yet you will persist in talking to me about my inconsequential doings on the stage."

"But," said he, "I was not aware you had distinguished yourself in this line."

"'Twas ever thus," said I. "The history of invention teems with the wrongful wresting of reward from the patient investigator. Some other brow will wear the laurel which should have been mine. History, however, will vindicate my claim."

# XXXII

## "MRS. MIDGET"

It is generally difficult to determine the origin of nicknames. As a rule, however, they are founded on some evident characteristic of the individual thus labelled and defined; so that when "Mrs. Midget" was called "Mrs. Midget," it seemed a most proper cognomen. "Mrs. Midget" was small and elf-like; bashful, elusive, and, in a sweet way, mysterious; eager and earnest about her work, ready, indefatigable, and observant. Her forehead was high, her nose, tip-tilted like a flower, was slightly on one side, and she laughed with lips close together like a rosebud. She had a great sense of humor and her eyes were full of wonder.

In the same manner when "Mr. Oldest" was dubbed "Mr. Oldest," that seemed an entirely appropriate name for him. He was only about twenty-four, but there was a general impression that he was at least a hundred and two. Anyhow, he seemed appallingly ancient to "Mrs. Midget," who herself was just sixteen.

It was the habit of "Mr. Oldest" to work very hard at everything and at nothing. In fact, a candid and unpleasant friend had said to him one day: "You think you work, but you don't; you fidget." Indeed this was frequently the case, for much of the effort of "Mr. Oldest" failed to get him anywhere. Still his restlessness was of the kind exhibited by persons eager to start in a race,

and who lift up first one foot and then another; who hop about and swing their arms and cry "Ha, ha!" as the war-horse of the Scriptures is reported to have done, when he scented the battle from afar, and who clap their hands as the little hills are admitted to have clapped theirs, on the same excellent authority. The little hills behaved thus because they were glad, and "Mr. Oldest" was glad—not about anything in particular, but just because he wanted to work and because there seemed to be plenty of work to do.

"Mr. Oldest" was, in fact, so anxious to be up and doing that no doubt his features at twenty-four took, on occasion, the aspect of Methuselah; so that when, one fine day, he was addressed as "Mr. Oldest" he became "Mr. Oldest" from thenceforth.

It was in the summer of 1887 that "Mr. Oldest" started in to fidget abnormally concerning a certain play. "Mrs. Midget" was cast for a part in it. That is now thirty years ago, but "Mr. Oldest" can remember quite well the slim, childish figure in a summer frock who came to rehearsal. She had very little to say, but watched with large eyes everything that transpired. At that time "Mrs. Midget" had a way of speaking with her mouth pursed up and her lips not opening very far. She laughed after the same fashion, and "Mr. Oldest," who took upon himself to rehearse this play, and to tell everybody how to do everything, tried to get "Mrs. Midget" to talk with more open lips, and to laugh with wider gladness. This matter of laughing was a particular fad of "Mr. Oldest." His own laugh was mirthless to a degree. It was not properly a laugh at all, but a succession of short, sharp explosions; or, when he was uncontrollably merry, a wail as of some lost soul, or of some

animal in pain. In ordinary social intercourse this did not matter, but when it came to impersonating characters which should indicate merriment, joy, or humorous appreciation, here was a serious defect. Therefore, "Mr. Oldest" had determined to conquer it. He would have what he called "laughing parties." That is to say, he would gather together four or five victims—the low comedian of his company, the old woman, the soubrette, and any other who had a blithe spirit, a comic face, or even a miserable countenance which might excite laughter. He would seat them on chairs very close together in a circle. He would say: "Now then, we will laugh."

"At what?" some one would ask.

"At nothing," would say "Mr. Oldest." "One, two, three, laugh!" and they would laugh, at first without any mirth at all, then the absurdity of it would beget mirth. The distorted face of the comedian laughing against his will, the distress of the miserable man who objected to laughter, the old lady conscious of dignity outraged—shortly the whole lot would feel the contagion of laughter, and would become hysterical. Meanwhile, "Mr. Oldest" would direct operations, his voice rising above the din.

"We will make various sounds," he would say. "We will laugh, Ho, ho! Ha, ha! Hi, hi! He, he! Hu, hu! Again! Keep it up!"

The martyrs would obey and thus "Mr. Oldest" cultivated his own laughter at the expense of the peace of mind and perchance the sanity of his friends.

When it became evident that "Mrs. Midget's" laugh was open to improvement, "Mr. Oldest" took her aside and explained his system. Soon she was made one of the party, and, seated with the others on the stage after

a rehearsal, she was made to laugh. To this day she will tell you that the laughter with which she now fascinates you was due to this treatment.

"Mr. Oldest's" laugh yet troubles him. He has to keep his eye on it constantly. It is spoken of still as a stage laugh, and is accounted painful to the listener. But "Mr. Oldest" perseveres and hopes to laugh loud and long before he dies.

For two years "Mrs. Midget" played parts with "Mr. Oldest," and then the charm and industry for which she had become noticeable attracted the attention of wise men, and she began to climb, step by step, the ladder of fame.

She was in the habit of declaring that the fidgeting of "Mr. Oldest" had induced her to fidget, too. She became renowned as a great worker, quite indefatigable, with a consuming ambition to do great things in the theatre.

"Mr. Oldest," between moments of fidgeting, had confided to her that one day he meant to play Hamlet. He had mentioned this weakness of his to others, who laughed, but "Mrs. Midget" did not laugh; she did not say anything, but she did not laugh, and "Mr. Oldest" was not in the least surprised to learn later on that "Mrs. Midget" was at that very moment at work on her prompt book of "Romeo and Juliet."

"Mr. Oldest's" fidgeting led him a pretty dance. He played all sorts of parts in all sorts of plays, while "Mrs. Midget" steadily climbed up and up year by year. On the 6th of December of every year "Mr. Oldest" would always receive a telegram which read:

Dear Mr. Oldest: Many happy returns of the day. Mrs. Midget.

This was not a voluminous correspondence, but it was a link which held two fidgeters together in an interesting and pretty way for a number of seasons.

One day when "Mrs. Midget" had become a "star" actress, and "Mr. Oldest" was rehearsing a new play, he received a note asking if she could attend his rehearsal. Now, this was a thing that "Mr. Oldest" would never allow anybody to do. He hated to have people sit in front and watch him in the process of self-discovery. He preferred to fidget without the gaze of prying eyes. Still he felt sure of "Mrs. Midget's" sympathy and understanding, so he wrote her an affectionate note and begged her to come. She was to sit up in the gallery, and no one was to be aware of her presence. She was to have pencil and paper and make notes. It was a dress rehearsal, and "Mr. Oldest" was to play the heroic rôle of a Huguenot outlaw. There was much sword-play and much love-making, and there was moonlight, a sun-dial, and a troubadour; there was a king whom one had to defy, a castle to be taken by strategy, a terrible duel, and, generally speaking, "Mr. Oldest" was to be a very devil of a fellow. In his secret heart he rather fancied himself in this character, and he was rather inclined to think that he would make something of an impression on "Mrs. Midget." She came into the theatre by the front way, so that the rest of the company should not know that they were being observed; since "Mr. Oldest" firmly believed that actors should not be reprimanded or corrected before people not concerned with the matter in hand, it makes them feel foolish and humiliated, and distracts their attention to the detriment of their work.

"Mr. Oldest," having attired himself in all his finery,

visited "Mrs. Midget" in front of the house, placed her comfortably in a seat in the balcony, quite out of sight, saw that she had pencil and paper, and departed to take his place in the rehearsal. In those days agility was "Mr. Oldest's" strong point. It was declared indeed that he acted more with his feet than with his head; also those who wrote plays for him were careful to provide him with plenty of love-making under picturesque circumstances. Firelight, moonlight, sun-dials, turnstiles were enlisted to assist the melting mood. On this occasion "Mr. Oldest" threw himself into his part with enthusiasm; his duels were terrific, his comedy was side-splitting, his love-making adorable—at least, so he thought when he had a moment to consider; for he was terribly busy directing everybody and attending to everything, and quarrelling with the man who worked the moon, and the man who led the orchestra, and the man who rang the curtain up and down.

At last the rehearsal was over and "Mr. Oldest" sought "Mrs. Midget," so that he might receive her commendation and approval. She was nowhere to be seen. Those in front of the theatre said she had gone home as soon as the final curtain fell.

"Ha!" thought "Mr. Oldest," "she is overcome. The beauty of the thing was too much for her. That love-scene about the sun-dial, while the troubadour sang in the distance of 'fond love and false love.' And then the sword-play! That would upset any woman; perhaps it was too real, too terrible. One should have some consideration for the females in the audience."

"Mr. Oldest" discussed the rehearsal with his friends in the company. They thought he was very fine indeed, and he thought they were almost as good as he was.

*From a photograph by Sarony*

BELLE ARCHER, MAUDE ADAMS, AND E. H. SOTHERN IN "LORD CHUMLEY"

The next morning "Mr. Oldest" received a letter covering about sixteen pages from "Mrs. Midget." He began it with a smile of confidence, and ended it with an inclination toward suicide. "Mrs. Midget" wouldn't have the play at all. The love-scenes were nonsense; the comedy was horse-play; the fighting was lacking in spirit and danger. "Mr. Oldest's" make-up was all wrong; his costumes made him look too short. The music was too frequent and out of place. The lights were badly managed. The plot was obscure. One could not hear what was said at vital parts of the play. "Mrs. Midget" was very sorry, but failure stared "Mr. Oldest" in the face.

There was no time to lose. In two days the play was to be produced. There was to be one final dress rehearsal. "Mr. Oldest" recognized that every word written by "Mrs. Midget" was true. Her criticisms were astute, the faults found were evident as soon as she pointed them out. As is so frequently the case, "Mr. Oldest" had fallen in love with his errors. These things he would have become painfully aware of the morning after the production; thanks to "Mrs. Midget," he knew them now. It was extremely unpleasant, but it was extremely fortunate. "Mr. Oldest" rehearsed like mad. He explained to his stupefied comrades that everything which he had thought was all right was all wrong. Love-scenes, combats, lights, music, make-up, costumes were rewritten, reorganized, reformed, altered, modified, perfected. The play was a great success. The author and "Mr. Oldest" alone knew whose medicine had cured them. Everybody else believes to this day that they did it all themselves.

The fact is that "Mrs. Midget's" art is not accidental

nor by any means a thing of chance. She worked very hard to find out why things are, and she was able to apply method to her analysis. She is a living instance of the truth that faith can move mountains, and that work can accomplish what seems to be impossible. She is a small, fragile woman, and she has done the labor of a strong man.

Says the intelligent reader: "This is all very pretty, but it is clear that you yourself are 'Mr. Oldest.' We know you quite well with your sword-play and your sun-dial. You have revealed yourself during this tale in a hundred ways. But who is 'Mrs. Midget'? That is what interests us. Who is this quaint, mysterious, elfin creature who hid up in the gallery and is so strangely wise? It is very evident that you have a soft spot in your heart for her."

"Hush!—bend over—lend me your ear. Is any one listening? Here in the twilight I will whisper, 'Mrs. Midget' is——"

"Yes! Yes! Go on!"

"You promise not to tell?"

"Yes, I say!"

"Whom do you think?"

"I can't imagine. Tell me quick!"

"You'll keep it dark?"

"Oh, yes. Who is she?"

"'Mrs. Midget' is Maude Adams."

One day "Mrs. Midget," now become a great star, very sweetly confided to Miss Katherine Wilson, a mutual comrade and old friend, that she would like to meet "Mr. Oldest" after many years and exchange reminiscences over the festive board. "Mr. Oldest" jumped at the suggestion, and invited Miss Wilson and "Mrs.

Midget" to dine with him at his abode. He ordered a delicious dinner and made great preparations; but, being a stupid creature, capable of entertaining only one idea in his head at a time, and being absorbed as usual with his propensity for fidgeting, he meanwhile accepted another invitation for the very evening on which he had asked "Mrs. Midget" to dinner. Herr Conried had sent word to "Mr. Oldest" that he had a fine play for him which he wished to talk about and desired that "Mr. Oldest" would take dinner at his house on this identical evening, so that Herr Conried could read the play and tell "Mr. Oldest" about its production in Germany. On the spur of the moment, and in the midst of his work, "Mr. Oldest" accepted the suggestion and promptly forgot about it. So that on the night when his party for "Mrs. Midget" was prepared and he, dressed in his best clothes, awaited her arrival, having ordered the most beautiful flowers for his table and lovely bouquets for "Mrs. Midget" and his old friend, Miss Wilson, while he stood admiring the perfection of his preparations, fixing this and changing that, he was suddenly seized with the awful thought that this was the date of Herr Conried's dinner. What was to be done? He was due at Herr Conried's house in twenty minutes! "Mrs. Midget" was at that instant on her way to his door. Despair lent "Mr. Oldest" some semblance of wit and he seized the telephone and called up Mr. Conried, told him frankly that he had mixed his dates and asked Mr. Conried to come and dine with *him*. Mr. Conried declared he could not do that, since he had invited some friends to meet "Mr. Oldest," but said that he and Mrs. Conried would be delighted if "Mr. Oldest" would bring his two friends to dine at *his* house.

"Mr. Oldest" accepted gladly and hung up the receiver, only to recall that he had not confided to Mr. Conried who his two friends were. At that moment the bell rang. "Mr. Oldest" opened the door himself, and there stood "Mrs. Midget" and Miss Wilson.

"Stay!" cried "Mr. Oldest" to the driver of the carriage which had brought them. "Stay, one moment! Quick!" said he to the astonished "Mrs. Midget" and the confounded Miss Wilson, "I am going to take you out to dinner! The most wonderful plan! You will be delighted!"

"Where to?" said "Mrs. Midget" and Miss Wilson with one voice.

"No matter," said "Mr. Oldest"; "leave it to me!"

They were off by now, and there was much excitement and curiosity as to their destination. Soon they arrived at Herr Conried's door. "Mr. Oldest" hurried them up the stoop to the house and rang the bell.

"Whose house is this?" said "Mrs. Midget."

"Herr Conried's," said "Mr. Oldest"; "we dine with him."

"No! No!" cried "Mrs. Midget," "I can't do it! We don't speak! We have quarrelled! We——"

But she was, by now, inside the door and despite her protestations was greeted by Mr. and Mrs. Conried. Soon she was in the midst of a joyful occasion. The dinner-party was delightful. Herr Conried was gay, wise, kind, and made much fun of "Mr. Oldest's" dilemma. "Mrs. Midget" in a dream saw her quarrel, whatever it was, fade away into thin air, in a whirlwind of laughter and gayety. "Mr. Oldest" never discovered what the trouble between her and Herr Conried had been; but one thing was certain, he had been the means

of their making friends again; so that what had promised to be a disastrous occasion turned out to be a night of rejoicing.

Mr. Conried thanked "Mr. Oldest," "Mrs. Midget" thanked "Mr. Oldest," Miss Wilson thanked "Mr. Oldest," and "Mr. Oldest" went to his rest persuaded that he was a very clever fellow indeed.

## XXXIII

# "FLOCK"

When Charles P. Flockton died, a fine actor and a good man went on his last journey. "Flock," as he was familiarly called, played in my company for twenty years. Always conscientious, indefatigable, kind, gentle, serene; a dear friend, a good comrade. His personality was extremely striking—a quite remarkable face: aquiline, gaunt, strongly marked, saturnine, Quixotic; a very mysterious man, not of many friends, secretive, proud, a flashing eye, independent, intolerant of wrong, obstinate in right, even to his own undoing, a great humorist, a very anchorite; abstemious in all ways, never touching strong drink and able to live on bread and milk; a perfect gypsy, preferring a camp-bedstead or a rug on the floor; always cheerful, always kind.

"You imitate Henry Irving," said a critic one day.

"Nonsense!" said "Flock." "Irving imitates me!"

"Flock," although ever tidy and neat and picturesque, was almost shabby at all times. He industriously mended his own garments, sewed on his own buttons, and repaired the frayed ends of his trousers legs with extreme care. "He is penurious," said some; "a miser," said others; "mad!" would murmur a third. Squandering one's means was ever a proof of one's sanity.

Many pensioners, however, had "Flock." Strange, sad, poor people waited for him at stage doors; old women

and old men with tattered garments and wan faces, young people, too, evidently out of a job, would meet "Flock" and walk off with him, no one knew whither, no one asked or was told why. In a workaday world these things attract slight attention; we have something to do, somewhere to go; it is not our affair.

For many years "Flock" held a fine position in London. When he came to America he went out as a "star" in "The Flying Dutchman." The venture was not successful, but "Flock" looked the mysterious mariner to the life.

"Flock" was a great horseman. At one time he kept a riding-school in London, which he conducted while he was acting. A certain actors' society in New York took measures to boycott English actors in this country. It was suggested that American actors should resign from companies wherein English actors would be employed. "Flock," who was a member of this organization, made a vehement address on the subject and either was expelled or resigned. A positive fellow was "Flock." Once on a time "Flock" lived in a flat in New York with young Alexander Salvini. The flat was at the top of a building. In the street opposite were a number of small shops—a butcher, a baker, a candlestick-maker, and so on. I was invited to dine there. I climbed up the stairs, and while waiting for some one to answer the bell I had time to observe this curious list on the outside of the door:

Chops—one boot.
Steak—two boots.
Potatoes—waistcoat.
Cabbage—coat.
Spinach—one pair of trousers.

Coal—white shirt.

Wood—blue shirt.

Flour—socks.

Before I could read more "Flock" himself opened the door.

"What do you have your wash list on the outside of the door for?" said I.

"That isn't a wash list!" cried "Flock"; "that's the signal service. You shall see. You are before the dinner-time. I'm only just in and I cook the dinner myself. Come!" "Flock" went to the window, blew a shrill whistle, once, twice, thrice! "Look out at the other window!" cried "Flock." "You see those fellows come out of the shops? Now keep your eye open!" He took two old boots and put them on the window-sill. A man at the butcher shop opposite, who was looking our way, put a whistle to his lips and blew a blast. "Good!" said "Flock."

"Again!" He took a red waistcoat and waved it in the wind three times. "Potatoes for three," said he. The man at the grocer's shop replied with a whistle.

"Shall it be cabbage or spinach?" said "Flock."

"Cabbage!" said I.

"Right you are!" A coat was thrown in the air; came the response instanter from below. Some socks, a pair of trousers and innumerable garments carried the message to the waiting tradesfolk. Shortly a boy arrived with a basket full of food.

"You see, old man," said "Flock," "it saves a lot of trouble. I don't have to go down; they don't have to come up; one boy can do all the work. My own idea. Good, isn't it?"

Good it was surely, and might be more universally

*From a photograph by Sarony*

"FLOCK"

Charles P. Flockton in costume in "Change Alley"

adopted to the vast saving of labor and the general picturesqueness of life.

The dinner was excellent. Beefsteak and kidney pie, bread of "Flock's" own baking, English tea imported especially by "Flock" for "Flock," a Manchester pudding—"the only place in America where you can get one, my boy"—a great dinner! "Flock," cook, waiter, bottle-washer, here, there, and everywhere; Salvini, a dear fellow, happy as a child. In England most actors live in lodgings, and when they come to America they like to find lodgings to live in. They are fond of certain particular and long-established dishes, such as beefsteak and kidney pie and Manchester pudding. A friend of "Flock's" named Paxton, the scion of a distinguished family in England, being down on his luck, went as a waiter in a third-class restaurant in New York. A more fortunate acquaintance entered the restaurant one day and picked up the bill of fare; he turned to the waiter to order his meal. It was Paxton.

"Great Heavens! Paxton!" said the customer, "you don't mean to tell me you are a waiter in a place like this?"

"Yes," said Paxton, "but I don't get my meals here."

"Flock" played many parts with me. I never saw him disturbed or at a loss on the stage but once. We had produced a play by Paul Potter called "The Victoria Cross." "Flock" was my father in the play. I and my sweetheart and a number of others in a certain garrison of a fort in India are surrounded by hostile natives. There is no hope for us; we are all doomed; our defenses are being undermined; we can hear the enemy knocking—knock! knock! knock!—as they dig tunnels under the very building we are in. We get ready

for the explosion of the mine which is to blow us all to atoms. We hear the picks in the very wall; we take fond farewells and level our guns, to sell our lives dearly. The explosion takes place, the wall falls in, and out of the aperture, amid falling brick and stone and dust, appears my father, "Flock." "Fine, my boy! Splendid!" said "Flock" with enthusiasm. "Good! Explosion! Centre of stage! Expect enemy! Old father! Embrace! Splendid!" The scene was built with much detail. We rehearsed with our usual care; but even the best-regulated families encounter disaster. On the first night we had trouble indeed. The many pieces of stone were put in their position for the twentieth time; the real bricks and the real dust were there in their accustomed places. "Flock" was enthusiastic as he pictured himself as the old general in his khaki, sword in hand, coming through the smoke and ruin, and, standing right in the centre of the stage and in the midst of his family, crying: "You are saved!" The cue came; the explosion went "bang!" the property-man pulled his strings; the wall gave way; "Flock" dashed through flame, fire, smoke, and dust, when some perverse bricks, having delayed their descent, now fell from the height of five or six feet right onto the top of his dear old bald head. "Flock," staggered from the blow, got entirely out of his part, looked at me, and said, "Hang it! old man, this is all wrong, you know! Smashed my blooming head, old man! Oh, no, this won't do!" and much to the same effect. His anxious family surrounded him and led him back to the plot of the play, but it was an awful moment.

There came a time when "Flock" began to look very untidy and careless in his attire; also he was late for rehearsal occasionally, an unheard-of thing for "Flock";

also he went wrong in his lines now and then, an equally unheard-of thing. He was quite a different man as the days went by. "Are you ill?" I asked him.

"No, old man, never ill."

"Are you worried?"

"No, old man; never worry about anything."

Days, some weeks passed by; more and more marked became "Flock's" distraction. Some embarrassing moments occurred in our play, Miss Marguerite Merrington's comedy of "Lettarblair," wherein "Flock" had himself arranged a sweet scene, where he, as old Dean Ambrose, makes love to an old flame of his through the medium of that song, "Believe me, if all those endearing young charms which I gaze on so fondly to-day," sung in his trembling, aged voice with great feeling to the accompaniment of the zither, which he played exquisitely. This scene was touching and beautiful. "Flock" went all wrong with the zither; he could not go on; lost his head. For a moment the ship floundered, but he regained the helm and continued. This was quite distressing; no one could throw light on the matter. At length I reached the conclusion that "Flock" had fallen from grace; that one of those strange and unaccountable revolutions of character and habit we sometimes encounter had overturned "Flock's" admirable serenity. I could get no word of explanation from him, but was given to understand that my inquiries were impertinent, and that "Flock's" business was his own. However, I felt that my business was also mine, and that certain breaches of discipline must be called attention to; so I spoke harshly to "Flock" one night, and said in effect that he must be more careful, and that I would have no more of it.

The next night a note came to say that "Flock" was ill and could not play. An understudy went on. "Flock" was down and out. He could keep up his brave fight no more.

"I give up, old man," said he when I went to see him; "I give up. I didn't want you to know."

There, on a bed across the room, was all that was left of an old friend of both "Flock's" and mine. "Flock" had nursed him night and day for weeks and weeks. The man had given way to a weakness common enough, which quite incapacitated him from such precise work as play-acting. To be known as a victim of that weakness was to be ever out of work, so far as the theatre was concerned. "Flock" did not want me, he did not want the world, to know that this unfortunate had crawled into his house one night, a helpless, hopeless wreck; nor that he, "Flock," had, without help, tried to nurse the wretched man back to sanity and health, reputation, cleanliness, and happiness. "Flock" had given of his all—money, time, health. He had sat up, holding the unhappy man on his bed, and gone exhausted to his work the next day; he had gone without food and without sleep, and had suffered suspicion and abuse, and had had to give it up at last. Good old "Flock"!

This was not the only time he played the Good Samaritan. The things he so strenuously denied himself he conferred with lavish hand on those about him less fortunate than he. Strange, mysterious meetings he had with poor vagrants, which always ended with "Flock's" hand going into "Flock's" pocket, and then seeking the hand of the oppressed one.

At Prince Edward Island on the sea "Flock" had bought a lot of land and a modest house. Here he

had intended to spend his last days, but it was not to be.

"Spread my ashes to the four winds," said "Flock," when his time came, and so it was. Some friends took a journey to Prince Edward Island, and the mortal remains of old "Flock" were wafted to the breeze.

"Oh, such a little while, alas! have we
To gentle be and kind!
Ere we shall blend into the vagrant wind,
Shall mingle with the never-sleeping sea,
Then, ever seeking, shall we ever find
I, you? You, me?"

# XXXIV

# "LETTARBLAIR"

"WHAT is a Lettarblair?" said Miss Marguerite Merrington to me one memorable morning in 1887.

Said I: "Lettarblair is the name of a cousin of mine, Lettarblair Litton, and it is a first-rate name for the hero of your play."

We were talking in the sitting-room of Miss Merrington's home on Grand Boulevard at 120th Street, New York, whither I had journeyed carrying a letter of introduction from that identical good fairy who has flitted through these pages. She had sped down Miss Merrington's chimney, and, having waved her wand, Miss Merrington, a teacher of Greek in the Normal School, at once became plagued with a bee in her bonnet which buzzed to her concerning many a fanciful scene and many words of pretty wit and gentle wisdom.

"You shall write a comedy!" cried the fairy, whereupon the teacher of Greek seized a pencil and began.

She already had the matter in some shape when I paid her this visit. Events happen quickly when enthusiasts confer. In one minute, Miss Merrington's hero, who was a fiddler, absent-minded, and a dreamer of dreams, became in the play of her lively fancy a soldier, an Irishman, a man of action.

In two minutes he had changed his name to Lettarblair from whatever it had previously been, and in half an hour he had become enmeshed in some very fascinating adventures.

The play proceeded apace, and soon was in condition to submit to Mr. Daniel Frohman.

The authoress and her fellow conspirator, myself, awaited the manager's verdict with impatience.

"It is the worst play I have ever read," said he.

To many people this would have proved a shock. To us it was merely a means of perceiving that the play must be made better.

The advice of Mr. Fred Williams was sought. He was the stage-manager of the Lyceum Theatre, a very dear old fellow, and a wise man in the ways of play-making.

Mr. Williams, however, permitted himself on occasion to become somewhat the slave of tradition. In a certain play, Mr. Herbert Kelcey was called upon to enter the room of a house in London. Mr. Williams, reading from his carefully prepared manuscript, said:

"Enter Kelcey with a gun in his hand. Property-man, where is that gun? Hand it to Mr. Kelcey. Now, then, go on! Enter with a gun in his hand."

"Pardon me, Mr. Williams," said Kelcey, "but I don't quite understand. There is nothing in the play about a gun. There is no reason that I perceive why I should enter with a gun."

Said Mr. Williams: "My dear boy, there is no *reason*, but it makes an admirable entrance."

Mr. Williams smiled benignly upon us. He read the play.

"I will copy it out," said he, "perhaps something may occur to me in the process."

With much labor and in a hand remarkable for its size and its clearness, Mr. Williams copied out the play. We were then called upon to hear his suggestions.

Mr. Williams, with an all-embracing smile and a most mellifluous Dublin brogue, began:

"I will read you a play," said he, "called" — here he considered sagely, and then as though the idea were his own and an inspiration of the moment — "Lettarblair!"

"Yes," said Miss Merrington, "that is my title."

Mr. Williams ignored this remark.

"Lettarblair!" said he. "I will call my play 'Lettarblair.'"

"*My* play!" said Miss Merrington.

Mr. Williams read the names of the people in the play. "There," said he, beaming upon us affectionately, "there you have my cast of characters."

"*My* cast of characters," said Miss Merrington weakly.

He had reconstructed the comedy to some extent, and many of his suggestions and amendments were of importance. But we were disconcerted by his most amiable but insistent habit of alluding to "my play." However, that was merely a figure of speech, and we soon dismissed our misgivings. We both recognized the value of Mr. Williams's advice, and Miss Merrington went at it again.

In a few weeks another version was submitted to Mr. Frohman.

"This play," said he, "is impossible. I have never read such a bad play."

Again Miss Merrington and I departed, and again we consulted Mr. Williams, who once more copied out the manuscript and once more read us "*his*" play.

This happened a third and a fourth time until two years had passed. At length I declared to Mr. Frohman

that I wanted to put the play in rehearsal, but he was obdurate and would have none of it.

Things looked badly for "Lettarblair," and I had to write to the good fairy to say that I must abandon the conflict. Not so the good fairy, however. She went to Buzzards Bay with the manuscript and its author, who read it to Mr. Joseph Jefferson, the fairy hovering by. Mr. Jefferson said it was charming, and wrote to me recommending that I should consider the matter further. But I was now embarked on other enterprises, and my enthusiasm had grown cold. However, when Mr. Jefferson began his engagement with Mr. Florence at the Garden Theatre in New York I placed the play in rehearsal.

"Lettarblair's" Irish brogue and many very witty lines, a beautiful new British soldier's uniform, and some charming love-scenes were all very well; but there was no doubt that the story lacked form and backbone and plausibility.

For many days we struggled valiantly. Mr. Jefferson came to several of our rehearsals and offered valuable suggestions, but the members of the cast, all old and eager comrades though they were, felt that the play was incoherent and incomplete. Still I determined to try it at a matinée.

"I won't buy a single stick of scenery for it," said Mr. Frohman.

"I will do it with what is in the theatre," said I, "with the exception of one small front scene, and all I want for that is the table with the bench around it which one sees in Marcus Stone's picture."

"What will it cost?" said Mr. Frohman.

"About fifty dollars," said I.

"It is too much," said he. "It would be throwing away the money."

I consulted the carpenter and the scene-painter.

"We can do it for thirty dollars," I said.

"Well, go ahead!" said Mr. Frohman, and it is a fact that "Lettarblair" was produced for thirty dollars.

The people wore the clothes they already possessed, but I, of course, had to purchase that beautiful uniform.

Now we went to work in earnest.

In Act II the heroine has an interview with the hero in his rooms at the barracks. This interview is the real crux of the play, and certain matters are there discussed on which hangs the future conduct of the story.

One day I stopped at rehearsal.

Said I: "Miss Merrington, here is the great difficulty. I have felt at each rehearsal that this scene is unreal, untrue. It couldn't happen. The girl would not remain in the man's rooms after the exit of the others, and if she did remain she would leave the instant that Lettarblair, with whom she has quarrelled, should enter."

"She must remain, though," said Miss Merrington, "or there is no play."

"But we must make her remaining necessary. How will you make it absolutely necessary for her to stay—necessary for her to hear against her will Lettarblair's explanation and his protestation of love? There is every reason why she should go, and no reason why she should stay."

Here we were at a standstill, for unless this could be mended the whole play fell down.

"I have it," said I. "She must get her dress caught in the door."

"But she could turn the handle and release it."

E. H. SOTHERN IN THE HORSE-AUCTION SCENE—CAPTAIN LETTARBLAIR

E. H. SOTHERN AS CAPTAIN LETTARBLAIR
LITTON

"There must be no handle. A few moments previous to this some character must open the door, and the handle must come off. It must roll a little distance down the stage. Shortly the heroine turns to take a last look at the scene, standing so that her dress is between the door and the frame of the door. The person who has just gone off shuts the door and her frock is caught. She is a prisoner."

"She could pick up the handle."

"No, it is too far from her, and here is where we have a splendid comedy scene. She must try to reach the handle. She calls for the others to open the door. They are too far away to hear her. She takes that sword there and tries to reach the handle. She can barely touch it. She puts the scabbard on the end of the sword-blade, she touches the handle, but, ah! the scabbard falls off, and she cannot get it again. She moves to take off her frock when Lettarblair enters. She demands the handle. He perceives her dilemma and his own opportunity. He laughs, takes a chair, sits down in front of her, and there is the interview which she has to take part in whether she will or no."

Then and there the whole scene was acted out and entirely rewritten. Everything became not only possible, but convincing and inevitable. The play rapidly developed in every direction, and in a few days, at our dress rehearsal, our hopes ran high.

This particular scene at the first performance proved a fine success, and when the heroine was relieved from her predicament just as Lettarblair, pleading his cause, and trying to undo the Gordian knot which the authoress had skilfully tied, took the rebellious lady in his arms, when the door was burst open from without, the heroine

released, and the climax of the act shortly after achieved, Miss Merrington knew that her comedy was victorious. Soon the play was put on at night, and ran for a year.

This incident does not belong to the chapter of accidents, but is one of those opportunities begot of endeavor; for obstacles present themselves to the adventurer merely to be overcome, and of such conquests events are born. Thus was my father confronted with the impossible task of making the original part of Lord Dundreary a great or even a good character study when that emergency which rendered him desperate proved to be his salvation.

On the occasion of the first dress rehearsal of Justin McCarthy's play "If I Were King," Mr. Daniel Frohman pronounced a judgment which undoubtedly secured the success of that drama. In the original version the heroine, Katherine de Vaucelles, was aware during the entire second and third acts that the new grand constable was actually the François Villon of Act I, and the interest centred in her observation of the toss-pot poet's regeneration before her very eyes, and his transformation from a rascal to a counsellor and commander of the King's army constituted the chief interest of the acts.

"These acts have no movement whatever," said Mr. Frohman when Mr. McCarthy and I joined him in the auditorium on the fall of the curtain. "There is no suspense. That long recitation of 'Where are the snows of yesteryear' is extraneous, tiresome. There is no drama behind it. There is no conflict. The moment the curtain rises, we know the heroine is about to surrender to the hero, and when she succumbs at last we have anticipated it for three-quarters of an hour. There is

no surprise, no victory over obstacles, no achievement, no opposition."

Mr. McCarthy looked exceedingly blue.

I myself saw that Mr. Frohman's objection was just, but perceived no remedy.

"Were you not interested in the love-scene?" I asked.

"No, not a bit," said Mr. Frohman.

"Why not?"

"The heroine's submission is a foregone conclusion."

"The poem is beautiful."

"Perhaps, but since she already admires the hero all his wooing in verse seems superfluous. The action drags. If we knew that he was luring her into a trap with all his honeyed talk, and if, when she had declared her love for him she should discover for the first time that this magnificent grand constable is in fact no other than the ragged vagabond of the first act, then you would have a dramatic situation; we in front would be aware throughout Acts II and III that this revelation was pending, was threatening, and we would watch the rhymester's wooing of the haughty lady with keen anticipations, we would look forward to her anger, her scorn, and her denunciation."

"You mean that she must not know who the new grand constable really is?"

"Of course she must not."

"Who shall betray him?"

"He must confess."

"But that is the plot of the 'Lady of Lyons.' That is exactly what Claude Melnotte does."

"What does that matter? Such a revelation is one of the thirty-six situations of Gozzi. Novelty consists not so much in situation as in treatment."

The wisdom of these remarks was evident.

That night Mr. McCarthy rewrote the scenes of the second and third acts. The alterations were surprisingly simple.

The next day we rehearsed the new version. The love-scene, the poem, the wooing, all assumed a new interest. Every word and glance which now drew the heroine more and more into the mesh of love increased the excitement of the auditor, and when Villon, having won her heart, confessed that he was the vagabond poet and Katherine denounced him for his perfidy, the strength of the situation was intense.

Thus did a grave fault beget a great excellence.

Some time after the success of the play Mr. McCarthy said: "That was a lucky thought of mine, that change at the end of the second act."

A lady who had been present at the dress rehearsal laughed scornfully. "*Your* thought!" said she. "Why, the idea was *mine*."

"Really," said I, "it is immaterial, but in mere justice to myself and in the cause of truth and history I must declare that the suggestion was *mine*."

Such is the ingratitude of the victorious.

## XXXV

# MEADOW-LARKS AND GIANTS' ROBES

In a field adjoining a village churchyard "Me" one day discovered a human skull. No doubt an absent-minded sexton had placed it on one side when making a new grave. Perhaps it had rolled away, and the kindly grass had covered it. The skull was broken and within the cavity a lark had built its nest. Three small birds were chirping therein. Soon they would take flight and rise to heaven's gate carolling their hymn of praise.

Thus did the voice of song proceed from the ruined temple in spite of the destroyer, and in the midst of death there was life. It was as though—

> "The immortal mind that hath forsook
> Her mansion in this fleshly nook"

had returned in new guise to the ruin of her former home, and into the shattered receptacle had, in mere exuberance of joy, poured the wine of life anew.

Garlanded without by wild flowers and echoing within the love-songs of the birds, might one not contemplate this once human habitation and say: "Death, where is thy victory?"

We read in the lives of distinguished painters how a little sketch made at random, and the folds of a drapery set down as the whim chanced, and the study of a figure made in years gone by, one day gather about the nucleus

of a wandering thought, and there on the instant a great picture is conceived, each one of these separate and vagrant memories contributing its hoarded treasure to the common store.

The same contribution of experience to practise occurs in literature and in life. So in the mind of "Me" the picture of the hermit, the thought of the retreat of the meadow-lark, one day peeped in at the window of his remembrance as he read in Lamb's "Tales from Shakespeare" the story of the bereaved Hamlet—where once he had wished to be an Indian he now craved to impersonate the sombre prince.

The curious gratification which mankind experiences in contemplating the story of "Hamlet" was once amusingly instanced in the remark of a small child who one day watched a rehearsal of the tragedy.

"Which of our plays do you like the best?" I asked her, as she sat on a trunk absorbed in the scenes of treachery, incest, murder, and revenge.

"'Hamlet,'" she lisped.

"Why?" said I.

"Because it is so happy," said she.

She meant, no doubt, because she received so much satisfaction from the tale. The pity for the hero's blighted love, the justice of his cry for vengeance, and the final punishment of the wicked King, all satisfied her sense of right.

In a small, old-fashioned album for cartes de visite was a photograph of Edwin Booth as the Prince of Denmark which he had presented to "Me's" mother. This picture must have been taken about 1865. Gazing at the beautiful, sad face, "Me" fed his imaginings while his mother read to him the pages of the play, and, like

the other little child of a later day, he was fascinated by the "happy" story.

"Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now, your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now to mock your own grinning."

Here would "Me's" mind hark back to the poor abandoned head-piece wherein the lark had nested, and he longed from the skeleton of the printed page to see the prince in flesh and blood take wing.

It was not until 1879 that I, no longer "Me," saw Mr. Booth play Hamlet. It is enough to say that all longings were fulfilled.

Edwin Booth's genius shone like a good deed in a naughty world. His light was so steady and pure and his acting so free from exaggeration that he baffled imitation, although all the ambitious actors of my early days took him as their ideal. However, here was no strange gait nor curious utterance to copy. Dignity, beauty of speech and of carriage, and a very noble simplicity shamed imitation and stripped one bare of all pretending. Booth was unique in his grandeur. It is not likely he will find an adequate successor.

"Dost thou in the name of this child renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same and the sinful desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow nor be led by them?"

Had it not been for the fear of this undertaking, Edwin Booth would have granted my father's wish and would have become my sponsor in baptism.

Said he to Mr. Daniel Frohman: "When E. A. Sothern

asked me to be godfather to his son Edward, I really feared I might have my hands full should I register these vows of a godparent. Sothern himself was such a harum-scarum fellow at that time, with his practical jokes and his spirit-rapping and his amazing vitality—a very present terror to nervous and staid persons—that I, who looked upon such covenants seriously, hesitated to guarantee his son from 'the devil and all his works' or from 'the vain pomp and glory of the world,' so I managed to evade the obligation."

However, when, many years later, I began to play parts of some consequence at the old Lyceum Theatre, Edwin Booth would come now and again, and, having purchased a seat in the balcony, would sit there all by himself, to see whither my inherited effervescence had led me. Frank Bunce, the business manager, discovered him two or three times in this seclusion and protested that Mr. Booth should accept the hospitality of the theatre in the shape of a box. But this he would never do, his visit being always unexpected, and his seat always in the balcony.

I never heard from him, how he liked the plays, or whether he congratulated himself or not that he had refrained from becoming my godfather. It is quite possible that he experienced a melancholy satisfaction while contemplating me that he was in no way responsible for so eccentric and restless a comedian. When later on the Players' Club was established, I would meet Mr. Booth occasionally, and he would speak with affection of his early association with my father and mother.

Many years after his death I was greatly surprised and touched to receive from his daughter, Mrs. Grossman, the pouch which her father was accustomed to wear

*From a photograph by A. A. Turner in the collection of Robert Coster*

EDWIN BOOTH

in "Hamlet," with a very charming letter saying that she had witnessed our production of that tragedy.

It is a pleasant figure of speech to declare that one steps into this man's shoes or wears that man's mantle, but, alas! inhabiting the shoes and upholding the mantle is but the office of a dummy. These seven-league boots may run away with one's reputation, and this giant's robe incontinently smother one.

One of the least glorious actors I have known had a mania for the collecting of wardrobe belonging to the great ones of the past. He would come on the stage wearing shoes which had belonged to Edwin Booth, a cloak which had once enfolded Forrest, a sword wielded by Edmund Kean, jewels which had reposed upon the breast of Charlotte Cushman, a ring which had been worn by Adelaide Neilson, a wig presented to him by Richard Mansfield. So conscious was he of his relics that he could never attend to the business in hand. He actually would assume during one brief speech the manners of these several people; so that he might enter as Forrest, address you as Cushman, bid you farewell as Mansfield, and exit as Kean.

Every article that he wore had its association.

I ventured to suggest that the many reminiscences conjured up by his various garments distracted his attention on a certain occasion.

"Oh, not at all!" he replied; "not at all. You see, I was in the navy."

The application was not exactly clear, but I concluded after much reflection that this explained the fact that he was so constantly at sea.

I must say that I have great sympathy with these collectors of odds and ends, and those same covetous

desires deplored in the baptismal office beset me on all sides. I have not yet yielded to my naval friend's weakness for wearing the clothes of departed greatness, but I glory in a treasure-house of the same. This lust of possession is surely a matter of atavism. The bird must build and own its particular nest, and discover and possess its own peculiar worm, defending it with bill and claw. Why do I love the ancient chair wherein I sit less when it belongs to another than when it belongs to me? Though still in the chair, am I not out of pocket? And why does the patch of ground I have paid for fill me with a gratification which the magnificent estate of my neighbor cannot by any means create? It is certainly not a question of beauty, for his park puts my little garden to shame. I can see his groves for nothing, and my one acre costs my all. My collection of stamps and my cabinet of birds' eggs elated me with a pride which the more splendid endeavors of Philatelist Smith or Ornithologist Brown were powerless to produce. After wandering through the palaces of the world I contemplate my single Tudor wedding-chest, my one trestle-table, and my solitary Elizabethan four-post bedstead with increased affection and enthusiasm. They are mine, and what's mine's my own.

But this is adoring the vain pomp and glory of the world, and probably denotes an inclination toward the devil and all his works. One's godfather would have a sorry problem here.

Therefore my sorrow that Mr. Booth was no godfather of mine is mitigated by the reflection that he was spared some concern on my behalf.

Every now and again one encounters the comment that it is a detriment to the conception of the dramatist

for his characters to be impersonated—that to associate this, that, or the other actor or actress with the Shakespearian personages limits the imagination and controls the fancy. Such critics surely pay a poor compliment to their own intelligence which should be capable of rejecting the incompetent while accepting what is excellent. A reader must perforce form some image in his mind of the characters he contemplates. Even our gods and our devils, and our heavens and hells take some shape. It is seldom, of course, that so entirely satisfactory a realization of the poet's ideal occurs as in the case of Mr. Booth's "Hamlet." Even the querulous Lamb could have found no fault there. The very first words I ever heard concerning the player's art dealt with this same impersonation when my father and mother were discussing the production at the Winter Garden in New York. Although I did not witness a performance of "Hamlet" until 1879, I am quite sure that my mother's description, and the little photograph of Mr. Booth helped me greatly to understand and to love the tragedy.

Had my mind had nothing to feed upon but the lame elocution of my schoolmasters, who indulged in a very false gallop of verses, I should soon have wearied of the poet's lines. But the actor's picture and the knowledge of the effects he had created made me eager to enjoy the story. The many thousands in this workaday world who have little time to devote to reading plays would not sacrifice their memories of Booth's prince for all the dissertations of the scholars, who, with due respect, will, on this particular theme, sometimes grow "as tedious as a King."

All the world is aware of Edwin Booth the tragedian,

but here is rosemary of his own planting which may well be gathered from an old number of the *Century Magazine*, and placed upon his grave for remembrance—a letter written to his friend, William Bispham:

Anent a certain friend, a poor player who struts, etc., but one I love with all the tenderness a son might bear for a father, one of the oldest and the dearest old duffers the good God ever made! Perpend!——— (beloved by his kind) approacheth now the time when the oil burneth low and the wick waxeth brief. He wants to settle in New York—his dear old wife and he—in apartments, in a good location on an economical plan, and loaf out the rest of their winters. The thought struck me that you could give me all the points touching the subject. Say if he wished to buy the furniture of a flat of perhaps five or six rooms, in some neighborhood you know, can you give me an idea of what it would cost for rent? Say a lease of several years, cosy and plainly furnished and one servant, a cook, for example. Do you know of such a chance for next year? And can you give me an idea of rent, cost of furniture, servant's wages, and other little details requisite for the comfort of a dear old couple of antique babies? Let me know as soon as possible for they contemplate selling their house, and retiring on a small income—I want to locate them in New York—for the balance of their earthly sojourn, which can't be many centuries longer. This *entre nous*. I thought I'd find, say, four or five cosey rooms and furnish them comfortably, rent the place for several years, and relieve them of all cares for the future. No one but you, they, and I are to know the facts, and even you must be ignorant so far as they know.

## XXXVI

# "MY OWN SHALL COME TO ME"

FALSE spiritualism and those pretenders who trade upon the credulity of the superstitious and unhappy—these were especial antipathies of my father. It was he, in conjunction with the late Sir Henry Irving, who, about 1868, exposed the tricks of the celebrated Davenport Brothers in London; not because they were tricks, but because they claimed their wonders were controlled by spiritual influence. My father and Irving performed all the Davenport miracles on a public stage, showing that they were merely conjurers' inventions. The house we lived in was a veritable wonderland, for my father in his study of magic had all kinds of paraphernalia installed. The place was wired throughout, so that trap-doors in floors or walls would open and swallow or eject various objects. For example, at a certain seance a peculiar shoe-buckle, procured after vast search and trouble, was projected with precision from behind a clock onto the centre of the dining-room table, so that a certain unbeliever should receive this token, the long-lost fellow of one in his possession. I saw this projection practised with infinite pains, so that the shoe-buckle would land exactly where the victim was seated. A small trap-door was made under the table. This opened with the pressing of a button. Within the trap was a basin of ice-water. During the demonstrations, my father would surreptitiously take off his shoe and sock,

place his foot in the ice-water, dry it on a napkin, and, under cover of the dimmed light, present a ghostly and clammy hand (foot, of course) to some one under the table. Usually, when he had sufficiently mystified his guests, he would tell them that all his wonders were mechanical tricks. He hated the humbug of spiritualism, but really believed deeply in actual spiritual manifestations.

I mention these facts to make clear that I, having been accustomed to the exposing of trickery since childhood, was not likely to be readily deceived by supernatural experiences. We have all encountered the "amazing coincidence," and may have paused, perhaps, to consider how strange it is that the paths of two persons shall, after wandering hither and thither all over the globe, in an apparently aimless and unconnected manner, suddenly assume a direct relation to each other; shall cross or connect, so that a clash or climax of circumstances is the result. Two sets of events—hastening, retarding, directing—each covering a period of years, the links of each chain being forged day by day, the victories or the defeats of the two lives, keeping those lives in the precise path where they will finally collide, at a ball, at a street corner, on a train. This is, of course, an ordinary reflection, but instances are always entertaining.

This instance concerns a match-box, a snuff-box, a bronze equestrian statue, a pair of paste shoe-buckles, a leather cigar-case, and a walking-stick with a cloisonné handle. From the four corners of the earth the footsteps of the people here discussed approached one another. Failure and success, health and sickness, moulded the succession of events which brought them hour by hour to the cross-roads where they encountered

after many days. In our drawing-room at "The Cedars," Kensington, there stood a curio-table with a glass top. Under the glass cover, ever since I can remember anything, I remember the articles enumerated above, with the exception of the equestrian statue in bronze, which stood on the sideboard in the dining-room. This was a statue of my father on horseback with two dogs looking up at him. I remember the sculptor modelling the horse in the stable-yard.

It has been my observation that when people die their small and more intimate belongings disappear in quite a mysterious way. Whether it is that our elders give them away as souvenirs, or whether the articles walk off of their own accord, when he who most cherished them is gone, certain it is that things vanish. I recall, I say, all of these articles mentioned, and then I became aware one day that they no longer existed. Where, I said to myself one morning, my mind harking back, as is sometimes the case, to that curio-table—where are those shoe-buckles which belonged to David Garrick? And where the cloisonné walking-stick, also the property of that great actor? Where is that snuff-box which belonged to Liston? Where is that big leather cigar-case with the initials in gold on the outside? and finally I wondered where was the statue of my father on horseback, and where the small gold match-box in the form of a portmanteau, which had been presented to my father by the late King Edward when he was Prince of Wales. As the event will disclose, these articles had travelled to the ends of the earth, and when the hour had struck they turned, as though they were so many needles on the mariner's compass, and pointed toward me, as though I were the true magnetic pole. By devious ways and

through many hands, oversea and overland, these things made their way to me who wanted them back. They seemed to actually escape from one person to another who should more readily carry them nearer and nearer to me, who during this time continued to see them in the mind's eye ever in that drawing-room under the glass top of that curio-table.

To begin with the match-box, the Prince of Wales, at the time he gave the box to my father, was very fond of riding to hounds. My father, too, was passionately fond of hunting. The prince had been exceedingly kind to him on many occasions, and one day on the field presented him with this small gold match-box. Shortly afterward, my father met with a bad accident while hunting. He was thrown from his horse against a tree; his arm was broken and his eye badly damaged. He was carried unconscious to a farmhouse near by. When he recovered his senses and prepared to depart, he observed that the match-box, which he had worn attached to his gold chain, had been broken off. Farm-hands were sent to the scene of the accident, but could find no trace of it. My father begged the farmer to institute a search and offered a reward, but no sign of the box was discovered. A duplicate box was ordered from "Coster," the jeweller, who had made the original, and this duplicate my father wore for some years. When my elder brother was about to depart on a professional engagement to Australia, my father gave him this duplicate. My brother, when about to return from Australia, gave the duplicate to one Mr. Labertouche, who had shown him much kindness. Labertouche, in turn, gave the duplicate to an actor, Arthur Lawrence, who in the year 1890 joined my company in New York. We will leave the fortunes of

the duplicate for the moment with Arthur Lawrence. Meantime, the original match-box had never been found. One day my brother Sam, who inherited my father's passion for hunting, was riding to hounds. He got into conversation with an old farmer who rode beside him, and during the talk divulged his name—Sothern. "Are you the son of Dundreary Sothern?" said the farmer.

"Yes," said my brother.

"I want you to take a bite with me after the run," said the farmer; "I have something to show you."

My brother went. The farmer, while lunch was preparing, went to the cupboard; then, approaching my brother, said:

"Twenty years ago your father lost this match-box in my field. This morning one of my men was ploughing and found it. Accept it."

Please observe that the paths of my brother and the farmer crossed for the first time on the very morning on which the match-box had been ploughed up after being buried for twenty years. My brother wrote me an account of this curious coincidence. I received the letter while I was travelling. I was seated in a Pullman car with Arthur Lawrence by my side. He had just joined my company that day. My manager brought me my brother's letter. I read his account of the incident. I then told Lawrence the strange history of the match-box and said: "I wonder what became of the duplicate."

"Here it is!" said Lawrence, showing it to me on his watch-chain.

Observe again that Lawrence had joined me that day, that he was seated beside me when I opened my brother's letter, that he had recently arrived from Australia and

had applied to me, a total stranger, for an engagement. Over the years, oversea, overland, he had brought this duplicate match-box to me at the exact moment that I received news of the finding of the original after twenty years. Lawrence gave me the box. Both boxes have come home.

An agent in my employment, named Craeger, said to me one day in Saint Louis: "There's a snuff-box in a bar-room down-town, and the barkeeper says it belonged to your father."

Said I: "It is an octagonal box, made of brass, and it has paste stones on the outside about as large as peas. Inside is this inscription: 'From William Liston to the Reverend Charles Klanert—From the Reverend Charles Klanert to his son, James Klanert—From James Klanert to E. A. Sothern, 1870.'"

"That's the one," said Craeger. "Have you seen it?"

"Not since I was about eight years old," said I.

We went to the barroom. I examined the box. I asked the man where he had obtained it. He was rather mysterious, and would not say. I offered to buy it from him. He would not sell it. "Well," said I, "I'll leave you my address in case you change your mind; meantime, leave it to me in your will if you die." I went my way, sad at heart, for I wanted the snuff-box badly.

Two years afterward, a bell-boy at the Virginia Hotel in Chicago announced: "A gentleman to see you, sir."

"What gentleman?" said I. "Go and ask his name." A strange name appeared on a card. "Well, show him up," said I.

A tall man appeared, a perfect stranger. "I have come to give you this snuff-box," said he, and he handed me the box; "also this cigar-case," and he handed me the

leather cigar-case with the initials in gold. "They belonged to my father," said he, "who received them from Mr. Connor, the manager of John McCullough."

I thanked him and remarked: "I saw this snuff-box two years ago in a barroom in Saint Louis."

"Never!" said he. "It has been in a glass case in my mother's sitting-room under lock and key for fifteen years."

"Pardon me," said I, "but I went to the place and handled the box and read the inscription and offered to buy it."

"You are mistaken," replied my benefactor smiling kindly. "The box has never been out of our house since we received it from Mr. Connor. We have valued it highly, but I want you to have it." With some generous and complimentary remarks he departed.

The thing is inexplicable. But the box had walked into my hands at last.

A certain storage house sent me a letter one fine day to say that a trunk belonging to my father was in its possession. I sent for it. It contained some odds and ends of old theatrical wardrobe. I took out a pair of square-cut shoes. In the toe of each shoe was a silk stocking. Wrapped in each silk stocking was one of those buckles which had belonged to David Garrick, and which had been presented to my father when he first produced a play of that name in London about 1870. I opened a very dilapidated make-up box. There was the handle of the cloisonné walking-stick; the stick itself, which had been of ebony, was missing. Said I:

> "Serene I fold my hands and wait,
> Nor care for wind, or tide, or sea,
> I rave no more 'gainst time or fate
> For lo! my own shall come to me."

Last year my brother entered his dressing-room one night in London. The actor who dressed with him said: "Sam, I saw a bronze statue of you on horseback in a shop in King's Road, Chelsea."

"Never had a statue in my life," said Sam.

The man assured him that in a pawnbroker's window was the statue with a placard reading, "Mr. Sam Sothern." My brother went to the place indicated. There was the statue. He went in and questioned the pawnbroker, who knew nothing about it except that there it was, and that the price was so much. My brother bought it. Where had that bronze horse carried my poor father during forty years? Through what lands had he and his two dogs wandered by hill and dale? What adventure had landed him in this pawnbroker's shop in Chelsea? Who had harbored him in content or sold him in poverty? At last we have him home again, and that is enough.

I was relating these circumstances to a young woman in my company one day, a rather reserved, quiet, watchful girl.

"It is nothing," said she. "All one has to do is to wait. You," she continued, "did not go out to seek these things, they sought you."

"Where did you learn so much wisdom?" said I.

"From the ceiling people," replied this strange girl.

"The ceiling people?"

"Yes. Yours may be different. Mine are the ceiling people," and she went on to tell me that ever since she could remember she had known and talked with and actually seen, not with her imagination, but with her bodily organs of sight, certain people whom she had first as a child pictured in the ceiling. Later, they came

in at the gate and drove up to the house and entered therein. Nobody else saw them ever. She knew them by name, and would look from the window and announce their arrival: "Here come Mr. and Mrs. Westover," she would say, and she would help them out of their cart and take them into the house, entertain them for hours, bid them good-by, and discuss their visit after their departure. "I saw them as plainly as I see you," said she. "They have watched over me and helped me always."

"It was your vivid, childish imagination," I ventured.

"Not at all," said she, rather impatiently. "I saw them with my eyes."

"Do you see them still?" said I.

"No," she answered. "They have gone back again into the ceiling."

My brother Sam, up to the age of thirteen years had as constant playmates several little people, especially one small old man clad in a green jerkin and tights, who would appear on the pole supporting the window curtains. They would slide down the curtains and play with him for hours. He used to speak of them to his nurse and his mother, but as he was given a dose of medicine every time he mentioned them he ceased to talk of his experience. He tells me that he was thirteen years old when they last appeared to him, and that in his remembrance they were not creatures of his imagination but actual beings.

Alas! I never have had any "ceiling people" to search the seas over and bring back to me my strayed mementos. They came on more prosaic wings. The imagination of a child is extremely sensitive and vivid, and one can easily believe that children seem really to see the

creatures of their fancy. It is not frequently, however, that grown-up people are so convinced. I know of two aged persons who are childless. But their long and constant desire for children has become such an obsession that they are persuaded that certain children have actually come to them in the spirit though not in the body; that these children have really been born to their souls; that they are present and that they can communicate with them; that they come and go and exchange thought, and this to them is no delusion but an actual consciousness. They play with them, converse with them, are aware of their arrival and their departure. These are not "ceiling people," but "children of desire."

The point where imagination becomes delusion is hard to define. Mr. George Augustus Sala was remarkable for his precise memory. He once explained to my father that he had arranged in his imagination a large room the walls of which were filled with shelves; the shelves divided into partitions; the partitions subdivided into a certain number of small spaces. Each space contained a small drawer numbered or lettered—the entire arrangement purely imaginary. But Sala declared that it was so actual to him that, when in need of recalling certain information, he could open the door of this room, enter, select with precision the shelf, the partition, the subdivision, the drawer, the book or the bundle and the document in the bundle, and turning to the page recover at once the matter he was in search of. Here are no "ceiling people," no "children of desire," but granaries of the mind.

But neither the "ceiling people," nor the children of the heart, nor the storehouses of the intellect exhaust

COURTYARD OF HOUSE IN NEW ORLEANS WHERE
EDWARD H. SOTHERN WAS BORN,
DECEMBER 6, 1859

the resources of the imaginative human being. It is agreeable to contemplate the adventures of things tangible, but thrice happy is he or she who can dispense with real-estate agents and payments of silver and gold, and live and move and have his being in a house which has no existence whatsoever except in the mind. Such is the joyous state of one I know who saunters by a river which is not, enters a boat which has no being, rows to an island which is on no chart, disembarks upon a strand where mortal has never trod, and daily proceeds to a house which is but the figment of a dream.

"I have killed 'Little Nell,'" cried the weeping Charles Dickens when the creature of his fancy had been slain by a stroke of his pen, so real to him had become the creation of his brain. When I have seen my friend smiling apart with half closed eyes: "Where are you now?" I have said.

"On my river," answered she; or, "In the great hall by the oriel window"; or, "In the long gallery; I am looking out on the hills." For let it be known that this is a staid Elizabethan house, very quaint and still and old, surrounded by great trees and quite full of ancient Tudor furnishings. Once there was a moat about it, but that has been done away with in the course of time by simply thinking that it was no longer there. There have been many alterations and the whole structure has frequently been moved from one part of the country to another overnight. For years and years the owner has been looking forward with intense desire to possessing a house in the country districts of England. She has studied the country houses of that dear gray land until she is actually an authority on the subject. She has concentrated her mind to such an extent on the

matter that during the last few years the precise house she desires has taken concrete form. She actually lives in her house. She exists in it. She drives through the great iron gates, and up the stately avenue. She lifts the remembered curious knocker. She sounds the long-beloved-quaint old bell.

To possess one's house without either rent or purchase is to live indeed rent-free, care-free, fancy-free. By the mere process of thought to be able to remove one's dwelling from valley to mountain-top; to be solitary or surrounded by a retinue, and, best of all, to be attached to one's castle in the air by such strong threads of love that one can draw it nearer and nearer day by day until at last one enters the door and sinks down to rest by the fireside, so after many days to find one's dream come true.

## XXXVII

# THE EMPTY CHAIR

ALTHOUGH he was distinctly a rolling-stone, my father gathered moss in the shape of friends to an extent nothing short of marvellous. His were not the friendships of an hour or a day; they lasted long after he himself had passed away. I inherited many of these friendships, and among the dearest and best was that of Captain John Shackford, of Philadelphia. It was not my fortune to see Captain Shackford often, but those occasions when I did meet him are fraught with tender memories. He had been the commander of one of the White Star Line steamers. My father had often crossed the ocean with him, and they had become fast friends. When I first began to obtain some success in America, Captain Shackford looked me up and asked me to dinner. I went gladly enough. The captain himself and a friend of his and his wife, four of us, composed the party at the Bellevue Hotel. The table was laid for five persons, but we began dinner with one place empty. This place was for my father, who had long been dead.

When dinner was over, Captain Shackford arose and addressed the gathering. One would have thought that there were a hundred people present. He began: "Mr. Chairman," addressing his friend opposite, whom, for convenience, I will call Mr. Feathers. "Mr. Chairman," said the captain, "Ladies" (to Mrs. Feathers) "and Guests" (to me): "We have with us to-night—" then

he launched forth with a eulogy of my father, serious, gentle, and tender. He proposed his health, and drank in silence. Then he resumed his seat to the applause of Mr. and Mrs. Feathers. Feathers then arose and responded. The captain then got on his feet again and made an oration of some minutes without mentioning my name, but pointedly discussing the son of my father, alluding to my various steps toward popularity and generously criticising my progress. This, too, was interrupted by applause and very meaning glances from Mr. and Mrs. Feathers, as much as to say: "I fancy he must mean you." At length the captain wound up by waving his hand toward me and saying: "I need scarcely say that I allude to our guest, Mr. Edward Sothern, the son of his father." I then got on my legs and haltingly offered my thanks amid great enthusiasm. The formalities having been complied with, with great solemnity—not at all as a joke—we then came down to earth and to cheerful conversation.

Every year, for many years, this same thing took place. Shackford would come all the way from New York to show me this kindness. Always there was the vacant chair; always the address to my father; always the same adulation of myself, as though I were not aware whom he was discussing.

Captain Shackford was one of the most peaceful of men, but my father, perhaps for that reason, was constantly making him presents of huge firearms. When he died, the captain left me a brace of these—two enormous revolvers.

One experience he had with my father was a precious one which he loved to relate. It seems they had undertaken to attend two parties on one evening in London;

CAPTAIN JOHN SHACKFORD

one was a ball in a private house, and the other was a children's party. My father, in order to amuse the children, had engaged a man to induce the servants of the establishment by certain largess to permit him, the man, to take up a position on the roof so that he might talk down the chimney. My father's plan was to indulge in some ventriloquial acts, and astonish the children with the voice from above. Certain questions and replies, and a code of signals had been carefully arranged. As luck would have it, however, my father got the houses mixed up. As the servant was about to open the drawing-room door of the first house they entered, he said to Shackford: "Now we'll make the children laugh; let us enter on all fours."

The two men got down on their hands and knees, my father winking at the servant and taking him into his confidence. "Now," said he, "open the door and announce us." The man did so solemnly enough. Shackford and my father crawled in. It was the grown-up party! The people were, naturally, amazed, but my father, was as usual, equal to the occasion.

"Stay where you are," said he under his breath to the humiliated Shackford; then, aloud: "Quick!" he whispered, "all of you flat on the floor. A man has escaped from the county jail, and they are about to shoot with rifles from across the street. They say they have seen him on the balcony. Quick! for your lives!"

So serious and intense was his tone that actually most of the people went flat on the floor. Others started to investigate; the host especially rushed out with great fortitude onto the balcony. The hoax seemed about to explode when a voice came down the chimney saying in stentorian tones: "Look here! I've had enough of this,

it's as cold as hell up here." It was the man who should have been on the roof at the children's party, and who also had been directed to the wrong house. A stampede followed.

"The escaped convict!" cried the host. "Quick, follow me!" He rushed to the roof followed by many of his guests. My father and Shackford did their best to calm the company. There was much noise and argument in the neighborhood of the chimney; then an ominous silence. Then more noise and more protestation on the stairs; then a crowd entered the ballroom holding on to a rough-looking customer, much disordered, and much dazzled by the illuminations and the splendor of attire.

"Convict be hanged!" cried the ventriloquist. "I was engaged by a man to get up on the roof and answer questions when he talked up the chimney. He gave me this address. I came here and tipped the servants and they let me up." Here he caught sight of my father. "There he is!" he shouted. "That's the man."

"Call the police!" said the host. "That gentleman is Mr. Sothern."

"I know who he is!" cried the man. "He paid me to come here."

"A likely story," said the host. "Call the police!"

My father approached the man. "I never saw you before in my life," said he, and stood looking his confederate in the eye. "Come, you know you are mistaken, don't you?" and he began to make passes at the chimney man—actually, he merely meant to confuse and combat the distressed and disarranged fellow. Much to his own amazement and that of the lookers-on, the man glued his eyes on him and seemed fascinated.

"Now," said my father, "go slowly down the stairs; when you get to the bottom say, 'High cockalorum,' then open the door and walk directly to the police station."

This the man proceeded to do; he walked downstairs, said: "High cockalorum," and passed out into the night.

My father was convinced he had mesmerized the man, but what really happened was: Shackford, who was holding him behind, had muttered in his ear: "Do what he says, there's money in it."

The party went on, much excitement prevailed and the evening passed away. Next day the confederate called at the hotel, was properly rewarded and comforted with explanations.

Another story that Captain Shackford told me was of an old farmer and his wife, each of them about seventy-five years of age, who one day approached my father in the dining-room of his hotel, and told him they had driven thirty miles into the city to see the play of "Our American Cousin." "We've heard tell of it all our lives, it seems to me," said the old man, "and my wife and I made up our minds to try and see it before we die. Now we get here and we can't get a seat for love nor money. We drove straight in my wagon to the theatre, then we came here, we heard you were in the house, perhaps you can get us in somewhere."

"You shall come to the theatre with me," said my father. "You shall stay here as my guests. You shall have supper with me and mine after the play is over."

He made those two ancient farmers sit down and eat their dinner then and there. He drove them over to the theatre with him. He interrogated the box-office, only

to find every seat in the house was sold, and that even the orchestra was placed under the stage, and their places given up to the audience. Two chairs were placed in the prompter's entrance, and these two old rustics were ensconced therein. Their excitement, their delight at the unfamiliar surroundings, was childish and even pathetic. My father kept them busy with attentions and anecdotes, and introduced them to his company and to all the mysteries of behind the scenes. Their old faces became flushed, their old eyes became bright with the novelty and the excitement. At length up went the curtain and shortly on came Lord Dundreary. Not all the plaudits of that great audience gratified my father so much as the joy of those two old people. Their rustic ejaculations, "For the land's sake!" "Darn that critter!" "Well, I'll be darned!" and the like, accompanied all the dialogue. My father practically played to them the whole evening. Their eyes grew larger and larger with the wonder of the experience. The pretty ladies of the company made much of them, and when all was over they were driven home bubbling with excitement, quoting lines from the play, and "darning" away until they reached the dining-room of the hotel. There, as was customary, my father supped with all those members of his company who might be living in the house. This night the old farmer and his ancient spouse were made the guests of honor. Their health was drunk, speeches were made, fun was fast and furious, and at last two very happy, astonished, and bewildered old persons were conducted by an affectionate crowd to their bed-chamber.

As a matter of fact nothing gave my father more anxiety or caused him more nervous worry than to have

anybody sit or stand in an entrance behind the scenes. He has made me get out from such a position once or twice, and never would allow any one to stand where he might see them. He did not want his attention distracted; therefore, he must have permitted himself some considerable anxiety and inconvenience by entertaining these old people as he did.

## XXXVIII

# "THE BEAUTIFUL ADVENTURE"

"WHY fear death? Death is only a beautiful adventure."

Thus spoke Charles Frohman as he stood with three other passengers, his arms locked in theirs, upon the slanting deck of the *Lusitania* as she sank off the coast of Ireland. At 2.30 P. M., on May 7, 1915, the vessel was torpedoed by a German submarine. Mr. Frohman could have had no hope of escape. He was probably wounded by the explosion and one of his legs was permanently disabled from illness. He could not walk without the help of a cane.

At such a crisis a man's soul speaks, and Charles Frohman's words illuminate his life and shed a radiance upon his death. God grant we may greet the inevitable hour in such wise when it shall strike for us! A man who can speak thus at such a moment can need no other epitaph.

I had not come in contact with Mr. Frohman for some years, although we would exchange a greeting now and then at Christmas or New Year's Day; but on February 22, 1915, I received this letter from him:

MY DEAR EDDIE:

I am writing you a confidential little letter because I don't want it known what play Belasco and myself propose producing here in the Spring, but I know I can tell you, and that is "A Celebrated Case." We were both wondering, Belasco and myself, whether we could

get you to come back to the New York stage this Spring to play the big part in this play and to be our leading star for the occasion. It would be fine for us and a fine thing for the audiences to have you in this part, I am sure. I hope you will both talk it over and, if there is the smallest chance, if you don't want to come to town I will come up and see you. At any rate I want you to know how eager we both are to have you in case we can get you. It was a great pleasure for me to receive the New Year's telegram from you both. I am happy that you thought of me. Give my best wishes to Julia and accept also the same for yourself.

Very truly yours,
CHARLES FROHMAN.

On the 24th of February I called on Mr. Frohman at the Empire Theatre, to thank him for his offer, which I was unable to accept. I had not seen him since his illness, and my wife and I were distressed to see that he could not walk without a stick, and that one of his legs was stiff at the knee. However, he made light of his ailment. He was enthusiastic, as ever, about his many plans. He stood up and acted vehemently the various parts in a play the plot of which was his own invention. He was in great good humor as he told of the proposed production of "A Celebrated Case" in which he had wanted me to play.

Mrs. Sothern told him that she had decided to retire from the stage.

"But you will give some farewell performance!" he cried.

"No," said she. "I am tired. I have done enough."

"But you *must* say farewell!"

"No. I have said it."

"You will never act again?"

"No. Never!"

He became very solemn and was silent a moment. "Strange," said he, "you don't want to."

He couldn't understand it. That there could be anything else in life but work seemed incredible. We have heard from those who were present how he conducted his rehearsals from a stretcher while he was ill, with what indomitable courage he persisted in his labors.

"Well," said he, as we were going away, "when you have your home in England you will ask me to come and stay with you. I'll bring Barrie, and we will stay for a week, a month. You'll love Barrie."

We were quite sure we would.

"Good-by," said Charles, "and thank you again for coming to see me."

He seemed unusually, almost pathetically, affected by our visit. We both remarked upon and wondered at it. I believe in premonitions myself, and I have thought since that his mood sprang from some cause beyond our ken.

Mrs. Sothern and I were both touched by his manner, and frequently during the next few days we said how glad we were that we had paid him this visit.

We shortly returned to Washington where we had passed the winter, and on April the 9th we received this letter:

DEAR JULIA MARLOWE AND EDDIE SOTHERN:

I know you will forgive my writing you through the typewriter. I am compelled to do so because I cannot express my feeling for you with my hand which trembles so much when I think of you. I want to thank you about the Osteopath, and I have started in on your advice at once. I have tried everything else. I wonder why you

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CHARLES FROHMAN

both don't sail with me (about the first of May I want to go). It would be a fine thing. As far as I am concerned, when you consider the stars I have managed, a mere submarine makes me laugh. Most affectionate regards to you both.

Yours truly,

C. F.

On May the 15th a letter arrived from London, written to my wife by a mutual friend. It said:

"Just a line to beg you not to come on the *Lusitania*. The Germans are bent on sinking her. They nearly did in the dock at Liverpool a few weeks ago. This is not generally known, but a shipping man told me."

Alas! even those who had been warned did not believe that human nature was capable of such a deed!

Hanging in Charles Frohman's office was a placard which bore this verse:

"Blessed is the man diligent in business. He shall stand before kings. He shall not stand before mean men."

Stand before kings he assuredly did, for his London ventures brought him "command performances" from Queen Victoria and from King Edward. As for mean men, I fancy they would not remain long in Charles Frohman's presence, for he himself was the soul of generosity. Indeed, he was quite princely and large about most things that he did.

My earliest contact with him began about 1883, when I landed in New York to seek my fortune. When Daniel Frohman had accepted the play of "Trade" (afterward called "The Highest Bidder") for production at the

old Lyceum Theatre, he sent me to Charles Frohman with whom I made the contract for the play on behalf of my brother Sam, whose property it was. Also I contracted with Charles for my own services. Charles subsequently transferred these contracts to Daniel Frohman.

My brother and I found Charles in the Coleman House on Broadway and 28th Street, where he lived at the time—the summer of 1885. I had met him frequently before, for, from the moment I landed, no manager escaped my importunities. I was on their trails all the time seeking engagements. Charles had ever greeted me with glad good humor, but he himself was on the skirt of prosperity at that period, coquetting with fortune, but not quite accepted as a suitor. Shortly he was to win her favor with Bronson Howard's "Shenandoah." But on this day when we arranged for "The Highest Bidder," I fancy Charles wanted Sam and me, and our little play, as much as we wanted him. The success of this comedy aided the fortunes of Daniel and Charles Frohman and myself.

Charles had no office at this time. He occupied a desk in a room with several other men, and here on this hot summer day in his shirt-sleeves he drew up the contract for our little drama which was to waft us all on the way to good fortune. We all signed it then and there. My brother was to receive a hundred dollars a week for the play, and I was to receive one hundred and twenty-five a week for playing the leading part. Later, on the success of the play, another contract was made for my own services.

In our hurryings to and fro I would often meet Charles Frohman—always eager, always smiling, always kind,

humorous, gentle, and lovable. Once in Boston he asked me to witness a dress rehearsal of "Shenandoah" just previous to its production at the Boston Museum. In the streets of various cities, in restaurants, all over the country we would encounter in our wanderings. Then one day he came running up the stairs of Daniel Frohman's office on Fourth Avenue. I was going downstairs with my new play under my arm.

"I am to play 'The Dancing Girl,'" said I. "I am rather nervous about it. I have never played such a serious part before. What do you think about it?"

"What will you take for your season?" said Charles.

"How do you mean?" said I.

"What will you take in cash—now—for your season?" said he.

"What will you give me?" said I.

"I'll give you forty thousand dollars for your share," said Frohman without a moment's hesitation.

"No," said I. "If you think I'll make that I may make more," so I did not take it. But this illustrates Charles Frohman's spirit of adventure.

It was many years later, when Charles Dillingham had approached me with a view to my joining forces with Miss Julia Marlowe, that I went to see Charles Frohman about an entirely different matter. My business concluded, I rose to go.

"What do you think," said I, "about this plan of my playing with Miss Marlowe?"

"Fine!" said he. "What do you expect to make out of it?"

"Oh, I don't know," said I. "About a hundred thousand dollars on the season."

"I'll give it you if you'll let me manage you," said

Charles. "I'll give you a hundred thousand a year each."

"For three years?" said I.

"Yes," said he, "for three years. Will you take it?"

"Yes," said I.

"All right," said he. "I'll send you a contract down to the Garden Theatre to-night." And sure enough Dan Frohman had the contract there that very evening, and I signed it in between acts of "If I Were King," which I was playing at the time.

Miss Marlowe was abroad, but was cabled to, and wired her consent. The thing was done. Such rapid action was truly Napoleonic and bore out Charles's saying: "I would rather be rightly wrong than wrongly right," a remark which requires some figuring out, but in this instance it meant: "If this Shakespearian combination is going to be a good thing for the theatre I want to be in it and help it along."

Charles did not entirely approve of my desire to play the Shakespeare rôles, but since that was my determination he was eager to support the venture. He was humorously candid in his criticism, and told me frankly enough that he did not like my performance of Malvolio, and that my conception of Shylock was all wrong. In a general way he preferred me in romantic parts, and once, as he sat at a dress rehearsal, he sighed and said to Miss Marlowe: "Why does he want to play Shylock? Oh, for the Eddie Sothern of twenty years ago!"

Under his direction we produced six Shakespeare plays—"Hamlet," "Romeo and Juliet," "The Taming of the Shrew," "Twelfth Night," "The Merchant of Venice," and "Much Ado About Nothing." These productions were all new and elaborate. I had a free

hand practically in the matter of scenery, costumes, and accessories.

The venture was expensive, and, although the receipts were great, Mr. Frohman felt at the end of the second year that he did not want to make three more productions, as we had agreed should be done. We, however, wished to proceed with our original scheme of three plays a year, also we wished to take our productions to London. Charles could not sympathize with our plans, so I asked him if he would like to give up the contract for this third year.

He said "Yes"; so we handed him back the agreement, and undertook the enterprise ourselves. He wished us Godspeed and we went our way.

When Charles and Daniel Frohman entered upon their careers as managers the business of the theatre was frequently conducted on a haphazard plan. If a venture succeeded, all went well. In the event of failure, the actors very often suffered loss. Any irresponsible person could take out a play and obtain time in various theatres. I have myself been a victim of such adventures. Owing greatly to the Frohman faculty for organization and fair dealing, theatrical affairs were soon conducted on a sounder business basis. The Frohman word was as good as a bond to any man. This was Charles Frohman's especial pride.

It has been the custom in certain quarters to exclaim against Mr. Frohman's "commercialism" in the conduct of his business. This abuse is quite nonsensical and unfair. The amusement-loving public demands many kinds of entertainment. It can be said of Charles Frohman that he never on any single occasion offered anything below the standard of cleanliness and good

manners, and that, on the other hand, he provided his patrons with the very best plays by the very best dramatists of his time, interpreted by the most capable actors procurable. The salaries of players and the royalties of playwrights increased by leaps and bounds under his generous direction, for he was ever ready to pay for the best. Masterpieces are not written frequently; if Mr. Frohman overlooked any in his generation they are yet to be discovered.

A recent play contest offering a prize of ten thousand dollars succeeded no better than previous occasions of the same nature in unearthing neglected genius. Nor did the generous experiment of the New Theatre, nor any of the several excursions of the dissatisfied and inspired display one actor or play superior to those produced by the commercial managers.

We are informed that the theatre has great power along lines of instruction and reform, but it is observed that philanthropists do not endow playhouses.

Sir Henry Irving's oft-quoted axiom that the theatre "must succeed as a business or it will fail as an art" is no more than plain common sense, and the frothing and foaming of all the ink-pots in the world will not make it otherwise.

When Haroun-al-Raschid desired to learn how he should govern his kingdom, he went disguised into the taverns, and there the toss-pots instructed him; for the failures in life can always advise the successful ones as to the conduct of their affairs.

Charles Frohman, no doubt, lost much wisdom by not hearkening to the wine-bibbers. They, on the other hand, would have had lighter hearts, heavier pockets, and happier heads had they denounced him less and

spent the time thus gained in emulation of his honesty, good humor, kindliness, industry, and courage.

The sincere tributes at his funeral paid homage to a public benefactor. As I sat and saw and listened I could but feel uplifted in my sorrow; for here, surely, greater than Death victorious was Life triumphant, a purpose vindicated, a calling honored, an example declared.

It was no idle statement made by Rabbi Silverman that Charles Frohman's last words will echo through the days and nights for "those who go down to the sea in ships and occupy their business in great waters." They will strengthen many a doubtful wayfarer. They are the greeting for our journey's end. "Then they are glad because they are at rest, and so He bringeth them to the haven where they would be."

# XXXIX

# SANCTUARY

EACH man has in the recesses of his mind some group of associations—some collection of memories—to which, as to a mountain fastness, he can retreat in moments of sorrow or despair; when by the scourge of chance, or by the lash of his own folly, he has been laid low, thither may he flee for sanctuary. Far, far away to some remembrance of home and childhood, or maybe to the door of some dear friend where, in the spirit, he may cling, as did those unhappy ones of the olden time who, fugitives from hatred or the law, found refuge within the precincts of the church. Here, for a while, will he bid defiance to ill fortune, arise from his defeat and gird his loins anew.

It has been my happy fate to possess such havens. To them in evil days I could sail away with the speed of thought and find my comfort with the morrow's sun.

People who go fishing may catch more than fish. They may land a sweetheart or a friend. Happy are the entanglements begot of fishing-tackle.

"Have we any onions on board?" said Mr. William J. Florence as we were about to start from Boston on a fishing trip to the Rangeley Lakes in Maine. "I must have plenty of onions," declared Mr. Florence.

Said my father: "Billy is so fond of onions that he hopes this ship will spring a leek."

"Why stand ye here idle all the day?" said my father to Mr. Ben Wolf, the writer, and to Mrs. Harris, who

was bidding good-by to Doctor F. A. Harris. "Why stand ye here idle all the day?"

Said Doctor F. A. Harris: "We are the scribes and the F-Harrises."

Here Mr. Henry M. Rogers, of Boston, approached, clad for the occasion after the fashion of whalers in the North Sea.

"I wonder," said my father, "where Harry got his make-up for 'The Flying Dutchman.'"

Said Mr. Rogers: "When Rogers was an actor in Rome."

Now people who are capable of such jokes as these are not easily daunted, and it will be readily believed that neither fisherman's luck nor any other luck could affect them to sadness.

That was a great excursion and from it grew a sheaf of those memories whereof I have spoken—a safe retreat in time of stress and trouble.

"My boy wants to go on the stage," said my father one day to his fellow angler, Mr. Rogers, "and I would give anything to prevent it. He will fail and he will be unhappy."

"Forbid him to do it, then," said Mr. Rogers.

"No," said my father, "I can't do that. I don't want him to curse me when I am dead."

I suppose my father thought that having failed as a tinker or a tailor, I would have looked back to the imaginary glories of my stage career and would have blamed him.

This was in 1875.

I remember reading a story of an acrobat who noticed that a certain man constantly attended his exhibitions. Wherever he travelled, through all the capitals of Eu-

rope, East and West, India, China, Saint Petersburg, the same eyes watched him. He became fascinated, then terrified. He thought: "Some day I shall fall; that man will see me die."

At length he met the stranger. "Why do you follow me all over the world?" said he.

The man smiled. "One day you will be killed," he answered. "I want to see it happen."

For over thirty years, every time I have played a new part, if not on the first night, very shortly after it, I have seen an eager, kindly face observing every movement and have known that the owner craved for me victory.

"Work on," he would seem to say. "It will happen one day and I want to be there."

First at the Boston Museum, then in New York, then in many cities, year by year as I crept along, the spoken and the written word, the constant presence, urged me on.

Man does not live by bread alone, and of all words that proceed from the mouth of God does not "friendship" contribute most to the spiritual weal? Juliet cries aloud: "Lord! lover! husband! friend!" rising to the superlative need of her despair. Without the sympathy of friendship sorrow is multiplied and victory is vain.

Just before the graveyard scene in "Hamlet," a tall, white-haired figure crosses the stage, and stands with folded arms contemplating the low comedian as he arranges the several properties for his scene—the skulls, the bones, the pickaxe, and the spade. The warning is given, and the visitor moves to the wings and bends to pass under the stand of a calcium-light. As he lifts his

George Holland  William J. Florence  E. A. Sothern  Henry M. Rogers  E. H. Sothern

EDWARD A. SOTHERN AND PARTY ON A FISHING TRIP, RANGELEY LAKES, MAINE

head the lightman shifts his light, and the venerable dome comes violently in contact with part of the iron stand. With an exclamation he clasps his hands to his skull.

The comedian has observed the catastrophe.

"Why may not that be the skull of a lawyer?" says he.

To which the stricken one responds readily: "Why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty limelight and will not tell him of his action of battery?"

Again it is Christmas night, when we of the theatre greet each other on the stage after the play. A great feast is spread, and tables make three sides of a square along the footlights and the wings. There has been a Christmas tree and a minstrel show wherein I am the blackfaced middleman, and a burlesque of the season's happenings. Now arises this same tall, white-haired form, and in a gentle talk he reviews the past and compliments the present. There is much laughter and some tears. The middleman's eyes grow dim. In how many places the stage door has opened when this kindly, courtly, eager figure, ever gentle, ever green, year in, year out, has passed to the dressing-room of one laboring player to bring the smile of sympathy and the hand-clasp of courage?

"Success. Yes, we must beware of success," says my friend. For has he not seen in the toss of my head that I believe I have achieved, and does he not sigh as he contemplates the poverty of my victory?

Never does he say, "The case is thus or so," or, "You must do this or that"; but "Do you think, perhaps, there is reason in such a reading?" or "I wonder if that

scene might not be improved by such considering," so that my poor vanity is soothed rather than pummelled into the true path. Or he will sigh: "She *should* have died hereafter—she *should* have died."

"Yes," I will say consciously, "I say '*would*,' don't I?"

"Yes," he will reply, "yes, you have elected to say 'would,' and no doubt you have good reason for doing so. She *should* have died, she *should*. That, if I remember correctly, is the text. Your amendment may be an improvement. She *should* have died, she *should* have died hereafter."

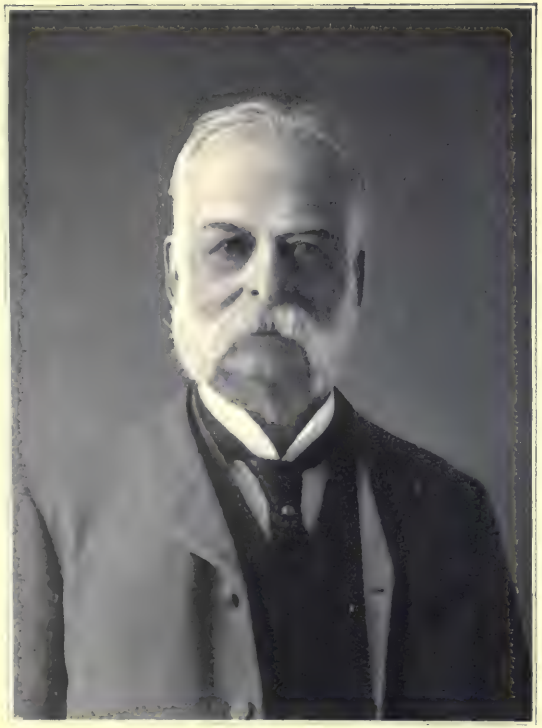
I go home with this line humming in my ear. No one has contradicted me, nor called my judgment in question, yet the next night, and for all nights to come, I say: "She *should* have died hereafter."

"Nay, then, let the devil wear black 'fore *I'll* have a suit of sables," murmurs my old friend. "Meaning," says he, "*before* he will wear a suit of sables, of course. Yes! Yes, of course! I have encountered that reading in the commentators, plaguy fellows they are; *before* I'll have a suit of sables."

Then will he read the line as its stands in the text: "Let the *devil* wear *black*, for *I'll* have a suit of *sables*. Sables, I believe, were the extreme of finery in those times," says he. Then with a gay gesture and a scoffing tone, "for *I'll* have a suit of *sables*. You played well to-night," says he at parting.

I go to bed and to sleep muttering, "for," "before," "for *I'll* have a suit of *sables*," and forever after I read the line as it should be read.

"Socrates was a wise man," said my mentor one day. "Said Socrates: 'I went to one who had the reputation



HENRY M. ROGERS

WILLIAM J. FLORENCE

of wisdom. When I began to talk with him I could not help thinking that he was not really wise although he was thought wise by many, and wiser still by himself, and I went and tried to explain to him that he thought himself wise but was not really wise, and the consequence was that he hated me, so I left him, saying to myself, "I am better off than he is, for he knows nothing and thinks he knows; I neither know nor think that I know.'"

"Touchstone says the same thing," I remark:

> "'The fool thinks himself a wise man,
> But the wise man knows himself to be a fool.'"

"Exactly," says my old friend, "and if we only recognize one another's folly, how mutually helpful we can be! Now," says he, "I shall go and sit in front. Booth's enunciation was exquisite," he declares as he picks up his hat, and, while agreeing with him, I reflect on my own manner of speech.

"And his tenderness to Ophelia! How much more true than the raging of Macready." And I resolve to temper my passion in that scene.

And so, for thirty years and more, "I have not lacked your mild reproof, nor golden largess of your praise." How often in moments of doubt and discouragement I have fled in thought to that door which ever seems to lie in green pastures and by quiet waters, changeless through the years, a steadfast spot in an unstable world. There have I sunk upon the threshold and have seized your hand, although you knew it not. "Sanctuary!" I have cried, and the phantoms of failure and distress have fled.

"I believe in some former existence. I was myself connected with the theatre," said Mr. Rogers.

"When was that, I wonder?" said I.

Said he: "When Rogers was an actor in Rome."

## XL

# I TALK TO MYSELF

"THE child is father to the man," said I to myself as I contemplated that picture of "Me" which adorns this volume. "And if you could materialize," I continued, "you would no doubt get down from your perch and demand of me, your offspring, how I have realized your hopes and expectations; to what extent, and why I have departed from your ideals; why I have compromised here and retreated there, and generally call upon me to explain why I am what I am, where I am, and *who* I am."

To my consternation, the large-headed, chubby-legged image climbed down from the chair, emerged from the photograph, fixed his goggle-eyes upon me and spoke:

"I have been longing to question you," said he. "I never thought that the conditions would be favorable. But here is the 1st of April—Lord Dundreary's birthday by the way—you have been reading about the subconscious mind; I have been standing on a shelf between 'Alice in Wonderland' and the 'Bab Ballads'; the moment is propitious, we are both in the mood."

This was not the vocabulary of "Me." "Subconscious," "propitious." "You take my breath away," said I.

"Very likely," said "Me." "You are not nearly so sophisticated as I had hoped you would be. I have sat here in this daguerreotype for some fifty years, and have

marvelled to see how you have wasted time and opportunity. Since I was photographed I have been obliged to retain this shape and this exceedingly cramped attitude, but the years have passed over me notwithstanding. I have seen and observed; one has eyes even if one *is* a daguerreotype. I have grown wise in my frame; while it is you, who have roved the world over, who are still a child. What have you done with life?"

I felt like telling "Me" I would spank him if he talked to his elders like that; but I reflected that he was my parent, my own flesh and blood. I really could not raise my hand against him. "Nonsense!" said I, "you are an infant."

"I am as old as *you* are," said "Me." "In fact, I was you before you were born."

"You are remarkably well-preserved," I muttered.

"I am a daguerreotype," said "Me." "It is true that externally I have stood, or rather *sat*, still all these years, but my mind has not been idle. I have kept track of you to some extent. Now and then I have been packed away between books of theatrical reviews, and since I am printed on an extremely sensitive plate I have absorbed the opinions, good, bad, and indifferent, concerning your various performances. From what I have absorbed, I should think you were rather a wooden actor."

I really thought I had myself well in hand by this time, and had recovered from my first astonishment, but I flushed angrily. "I was *not* wooden!" said I, indignant. "A writer in Kalamazoo declared that I——"

"There, there," said "Me," "don't become emotional. You know I never was inclined toward public life; I was quite averse to the stage; constitutionally I hated

crowds. How did you come to enter upon a career so entirely distasteful to you when you were 'Me'?"

"Oh, come," said I, rather sulkily, "you used to play a good deal as a child. I remember quite well how absorbed you were in your rôle of hermit, or pirate, or red Indian."

"That," said "Me," tossing his unreasonable head, "is the natural play-instinct of the infant or the animal; but for a grown-up man to pursue such pastimes seems to me grotesque. Nature has provided the play-instinct in order to exercise the growing and immature bodily and mental faculties of the——"

"Where on earth did you hear all this?" cried I in amazement.

"I stood for years on a shelf between Darwin's 'Origin of Species' and 'The Descent of Man,'" said "Me."

"Look here," said I. "You come of a theatrical family, and were surrounded by the influences of the theatre from childhood. Your friend Darwin will tell you the power of environment. It was natural, almost inevitable, that this play-instinct you talk about should lead you on to the stage."

"Lead *you*, you mean," said "Me." "You forget that I was incarcerated in this frame at the age of four. I was not old enough to be aware that such an institution as the theatre existed. Since that time I have led a most secluded existence, sometimes packed away in trunks with books, sometimes on shelves, sometimes in drawers. Having been photographed on a silver plate, I have reflected a great deal, everything in fact. You can see your face in me at this moment. I repeat, this daguerreotype process has permanently arrested my physical development, but has preserved my reflections

forever and ever. Now, really, you owe me some explanations. What induced you to become a rogue and a vagabond?"

"Stop!" said I angrily. "That is a vulgar error. Where did you get that?"

"It is generally known," said "Me."

"And, like many things generally known, it is particularly wrong. If you had ever been placed near Doran's 'Their Majesties' servants,' you would know that 'the celebrated statute of 1572 does *not* declare players to be rogues and vagabonds. It simply threatens to treat as such all acting companies who presume to set up their stage without the license of two justices of the peace at least.' Then, as to-day, any man high or low who transgressed the law would become amenable to the law, and would be treated as a rogue and a vagabond. Players in 1572 were 'Her Majesty's servants,' members of the royal household, or of the household of some great noble. They were persons of distinction and consideration. 'Ich dien'—I serve—is the motto of the prince himself. I tell you——"

"You are getting excited," said "Me."

"I *am* excited," I replied. "It annoys me to hear this rogue and vagabond talk. Players were never classed as rogues and vagabonds. They were licensed in 1572, as they are licensed now in 1915, by the lord chamberlain. A penalty of ten pounds is still inflicted on any actor concerned in an unlicensed theatre. You must have a license to practise as a physician, a clergyman, a soldier, a sailor——"

"I accept your apology," said "Me."

"I don't apologize!" cried I. "I am instructing you, you have been so long on the shelf——"

"Oh, don't throw the shelf in my face," said "Me."

I nursed my indignation in silence while the chubby-legged sage nodded at me wisely.

"Look here," said "Me." "I have been standing here against several volumes of Elizabethan dramatists, and the plays of Congreve and Wycherley. I think they are positively indecent, vulgar, common; I don't see how you——"

"Really," said I, "just to give your sense of decency a real shock, I will place you shortly against the 'Table Talk' of Martin Luther. Those were candid times—a spade was called a spade. The stage, as literature generally, reflects its generation. In a pure generation the stage is pure."

"Indeed!" said "Me." "What play-actor wrote:

Alas! 'tis true I have gone here and there
And made myself a motley to the view;
Gored mine own thoughts; sold cheap what was most dear.

Thence comes it that my name receives a brand
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand?"

I cast at "Me" Raleigh's "Essay on Style," and nearly knocked him off his chair.

"Read there!" I cried. "'Modern vulgarity is wont to interpret these lines (of Shakespeare) as a protest against the contempt wherewith Elizabethan society regarded the profession of playwright and actor . . . because he is not put on the same level of social estimation with a brocaded gull, or a prosperous goldsmith of the Cheap. No! It is a cry from the depth of his nature for forgiveness because he has sacrificed a little at the altar

of popularity.' What his 'nature' works in, and revolts against, is the judgment of the rabble, not his art, not his brother poets nor brother players. To whom did he sell 'cheap what was most dear'? Why to the brocaded gull and the prosperous goldsmith. It was for them he made himself 'a motley to the view.' The brand his name received was the self-reproach of the poet who had as manager of a theatre made a concession to popular applause."

"The plays of Shakespeare," said "Me," "are less calculated for performance on a stage than those of any other dramatist whatever."

"Rubbish!" I cried.

"I am sitting on Charles Lamb, and I know what I am talking about," said "Me." "Listen:

I confess myself utterly unable to appreciate that celebrated soliloquy in 'Hamlet' beginning, 'To be or not to be,' or to tell whether it be good or bad or indifferent. It has been so handled and pawed about by declamatory boys and men, and torn so inhumanly from its living place and principle and continuity in the play till it is become to me a perfect dead member."

"Nonsense!" cried I. "Lamb might just as well have said that because a preacher bored him, or his roof leaked, or his dinner was ill prepared, that sermons shall not be preached, houses lived in, nor food eaten; or that because painting, sculpture, architecture, writing were at one period undeveloped and imperfect, all of those arts should have been forthwith abandoned. The art of expression was no doubt faulty in his time, and is by no means perfect yet. But that is a poor reason why it should no longer be cultivated. It would be as un-

reasonable for us to assert that because Lamb's own farce, 'Mr. H——,' was such a ghastly failure that he himself hissed it, there shall be no more good humor while the world wags.

"It is distressing that the schoolboy and the ranters made so fearsome an impression, but it is they who murdered Shakespeare who should be murdered; not the art of acting that should be strangled.

"It is deplorable that Garrick's harlequin pose on his tomb in Westminster Abbey—which pose was, of course, the sculptor's choice, not Garrick's—should have irritated Lamb; but it is even more lamentable that Lamb should have lambasted Garrick concerning performances which he admitted he had never witnessed."

My vehemence appeared to make no impression upon "Me," who continued obstinately:

"When such speeches as Imogen addresses to her lord come drawling out of the mouth of a hired actress——"

"Why *hired?*" said I. "Why hired any more than was Lamb himself hired as a government clerk, or as a clergyman is hired, or an admiral, or a general, or a prime minister, or a bishop, or a king? Are not all of those paid for their services?"

"Acting is not an art!" said "Me."

"Really," said I, "you are a little prig."

"Abuse is no argument," said "Me."

"You repeat the cant of the critics," said I. "Look here—a dictionary—Webster: 'Art. The fine arts are those which have primarily to do with imagination and taste, and are applied to the production of what is beautiful. They include poetry, music, painting, engraving, sculpture, and architecture, but the term is often confined to painting, sculpture, and architecture.' "

"Well?" said "Me."

"There you are," said I.

"But it does not mention acting," said "Me."

"No, it doesn't," said I, "but——"

"As I remarked," interrupted "Me," "acting is not an art. Now, poetry——"

"The poet must have an interpreter," said I.

"Pooh!" said "Me," "the actor is merely the instrument, as a fiddle——"

"Precisely," said I, "as a fiddle to the master violinist who interprets the works of the composers, so is the body of the actor to the directing mind of the actor. He executes upon himself as the violinist, the harpist, the pianist executes on his instrument. The difference is this: the musician's instrument is made by the hand of man, the actor's instrument is made by the hand of God. But—and here is the crux—the actor's instrument being himself—his own limbs, eyes, voice—the studied exercise of these members and faculties would seem to the vulgar——"

"What's that?" said "Me."

"I repeat it," said I. "Vulgar! To the vulgar mind it would seem that the trained, premeditated, selected, tasteful, inspired use of these faculties requires no art, no method of 'doing well some special work,' to quote from Webster's definition of art again."

Said "Me": "Any one can walk and talk and look and gesticulate."

"True," said I, "any one can do so in nature, but any one cannot do so with premeditated art."

Said "Me": "I used to do it when I played Indians."

"There you are wrong," said I. "You actually *were* the thing you wished to be."

"Nonsense!" cried "Me," his large head shaking dangerously.

"You are behind the times," said I. "Much has been perceived since you became a daguerreotype. Listen! I read from Macaulay: 'Of all people, children are the most imaginative. They abandon themselves without reserve to every illusion. Every image which is strongly presented to their mental eye produces on them the effect of reality. No man, whatever his sensibility may be, is ever affected by "Hamlet" or "Lear" as a little girl is affected by the story of poor "Red Riding-Hood." She knows that it is all false, that wolves cannot speak, that there are no wolves in England; yet in spite of her knowledge she believes, she weeps, she trembles, she dares not go into a dark room lest she should feel the teeth of the monster at her throat. Such is the despotism of the imagination over uncivilized minds——'"

"You mean to say," interrupted "Me"——

"That the child imagines himself to *be* the character. The actor does *not*. The ignorant imagination of the child persuades itself that it actually *is* the character; the trained intelligence of the actor *interprets* the character to the observer."

"I can see no difference," said "Me."

"You are a little stupid," said I.

"Aha!" said "Me," "the grown-up attitude! How refreshing it is! While I have been on the shelf I have heard many people discuss acting, actors alone consider it an art."

I really wondered how I could ever have been "Me." He looked like an impudent little tadpole.

"I tell you," said I, "it is because all men consider

they are adept at walking, talking, seeing, gesticulating. But *dancing* is admitted to be an art—'the art of Terpsichore,' 'the poetry of motion'—because few persons can dance with the studied grace of the professional dancer. *Singing* is called an art."

"Of course," said "Me," "you as an actor desire acting to be looked upon as an art."

"Assuredly I do," said I. "And there is the difficulty. It is hard for the player to speak for himself, a special plea seems a specious plea."

"Your calling has made you distressingly flippant," said "Me."

Said I: "The last person who is permitted to have an opinion concerning the art of acting is the actor. It is admitted that he can know nothing about it. Still you shall hear Coquelin, the French comedian, plead pathetically:

In the first place what is art? And what do we understand by it if not the interpretation of nature and truth? The poet has for his material, words; the sculptor, marble and bronze; the painter, colors and canvas; the musician, sounds. But the actor is his own material. To exhibit a thought, an image, a human portrait, he works upon himself. He is his own piano, he strikes his own strings. He moulds himself like wet clay. He paints *himself*. It is not because the actor may assume the guise of a 'Frocisse' that you refuse to yield him the same consideration which you would accord any other artist. No, it is merely because he assumes a character which is not his own and because in ceasing to be himself you feel that he ceases to be a man. But I deny that there is degradation since there is no true abdication of personal dignity. The actor may indeed assume a disguise, and it is this assumed character, not his own, which receives the blows and mockery if need

be. But this disguise which he will doff ere long, he enters into with heart and soul, with all his mind. It is with his individual self that he makes you by turns shiver, weep, or smile. The noblest terror, the most pitiful tears, the tenderest smiles. He does not abdicate the throne, he reigns supreme."

"Of course," said that wretched little "Me," "there is a comedian pleading for his bauble. It *is* painful to see him begging for consideration. I am sorry you went on the stage. I wish you had entered the church. As a revivalist, now, you would have had a fine opportunity. There you would have been useful as well as ornamental."

"Peace!" I cried. "Listen to George Henry Lewes:

I have heard those, for whose opinions in other directions my respect is great, utter judgments on this subject which proved that they had not even a suspicion of what the art of acting really is.

People generally overrate a fine actor's genius and underrate his trained skill.

Another general misconception is that there is no special physique nor any special training necessary to make an actor. Almost every young person imagines he could act if he tried. There is a story of some one who, being asked if he could play the violin, answered: 'I don't know, I never tried.' This is the ordinary view of acting.

Acting is an art, but like all other arts it is obstructed by a mass of unsystematized opinion calling itself criticism."

"Ha!" said "Me," "now you're attacking the critics. That always seems to me to be taking a mean advantage."

I paid no attention to this interruption but warmed to my subject.

"Of Edmund Kean, Lewes says:

Kean was a consummate master of passionate expression. People generally spoke of him as a type of the impulsive actor. But if by this they meant one who abandoned himself to the impulse of the moment without forethought or prearranged effect, nothing could be wider from the mark. He was an artist, and in art all effects are regulated. The original suggestion may be and generally is sudden and unprepared, 'inspired,' as we say; but the alert intellect recognizes its truth, seizes on it, regulates it. Without nice calculation no proportion could be preserved. We should have a work of fitful impulse, not a work of enduring art. Kean vigilantly and patiently rehearsed every detail; trying tones until his ear was satisfied, practising looks and gestures until his artistic sense was satisfied, and having once regulated these he never changed them. The consequence was that he could act his part with the precision of a singer who has thoroughly learned his air. One who has often acted with him informed me that when Kean was rehearsing on a new stage he accurately counted the number of steps he had to take before reaching a certain spot, or before uttering a certain word. These steps were justly regarded by him as part of the mechanism which could no more be neglected than the accompaniment of an air could be neglected by a singer. Hence it was that he was always the same. Not always in the same health, not always in the same vigor, but always master of the part and expressing it through the same symbols."

"You are quoting too much," said "Me" impatiently.

"I tell you an actor can't speak for himself," said I. "I must confound you with authorities. Perception, selection, arrangement, execution: these are the steps of the artist in any art. These are the steps of the actor in the playing of his part. 'All artists have an individual

style, a manner,' says Lewes. 'It is a fact, little understood by imitators, that the spots on the sun in no wise warm the world, and that a deficiency in light and heat cannot be replaced by a prodigality of spots.' A certain clever mimic had the good taste to perpetrate a burlesque of Henry Irving at a club supper. Irving complimented him and said: 'Excellent! excellent! Exactly like me. Why don't you play my parts?' Why indeed?"

"Me" sat there blinking at me like Poe's Raven—"never flitting, never flitting," but somewhat silenced.

I continued: "A theatrical manager once wrote a volume to prove that acting was merely a collection of tricks, and that if one could learn all the tricks of all the celebrated actors one could exhibit or teach the art to the multitude with exactness. This, of course, is as though we should select all the mannerisms of all the distinguished painters, and exhibit them in one painting, or the styles of all the poets and combine them in one poem. 'Not from without *in*, but from within *out*,' speaks the artist. His mind informs and illuminates his medium, not his medium his mind. On the other hand, we should surely study the results achieved by the great actors, the means by which they secured their effects, just as one studies the old masters of painting or the giants of literature. At last one will formulate a style of one's own, as Robert Louis Stevenson relates that by practising many styles he found himself. The facets of individuality are infinite, but each can reflect nature."

"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," said the wretched "Me," who was leaning up against a Bible. "Tell me, and speak the truth, why do people go on the stage?"

"Some to make a living, as men preach or write books or sell pickles; some who are drawn to the drama as a means of expression."

"Expression of what?" yawned "Me."

"Of themselves, their conception of beauty, of life, of the ideal, as a vent for the imagination. As one sings idly and without words, or dances without skill, or scribbles verse, the spirit within is seeking an outlet, trying to say something. With one it is a whistle, with another, a symphony; with one, a mud pie, with another a cathedral. One skips, another evolves a ballet; one shouts for joy or abandons himself to anger, another writes a comedy, a tragedy, or tries to act. But this acting is no joke. For the journeyman who merely wants wages, and has no further vision than so much a week, all is well; but for the one who is called, and who is ready to challenge fortune, that is different. I do not mean that to be careless of payment necessarily indicates a great artist, but that the pleasure experienced in artistic expression is so great that other payment is entirely secondary. For my part, although I had to make a living out of acting, I was never concerned about financial results. I had a fine time doing my work; I was entirely engrossed in it; it quite possessed me every waking hour. To practise my calling in all humility and to feel myself become more expert, little by little, day by day, became a passion with me, and at last to seek expression in the great rôles of Shakespeare was a gratification far beyond the possession of wealth. I can look back on all the days of labor, and experiment, and preparation, and effort, as on a kind of delightful intoxication; and I say that such passionate obsession, and joyful abandonment and unselfish slavery, belong to art

alone. Here one lives in the realm of the imagination with the poets and the seers and treads upon the clouds. The cant that Shakespeare is not to be acted is nonsense. The pleasure obtained from reading is not comparable to the pleasure experienced in actually impersonating. The imagination is exercised to an even greater extent in acting than in mere contemplation. I am not speaking of the gratification of the auditor, that is a separate matter. I mean the experience of the player. A man who can act, experiences an added exaltation over and above that of the simple reader. To passively absorb the poet's thought is a small satisfaction compared to the elation of acting greatly a great part, and conducting the emotions of an assembly as one conducts a vast orchestra. Shakespeare's plays were written by an actor for actors to act. They are an inspiration to the player, and, well acted, an inspiration to the auditor. Here is enough reason that a man or woman of intellect should go on the stage. To love Shakespeare is to love the best in literature. To impersonate Shakespeare's heroes and heroines is to enjoy the poet to the greatest possible extent. Similar gratification is, of course, obtainable from minor dramatists in a minor degree. Most actors would play Shakespeare if they could. The reasons for not doing so are the amount of labor and study demanded, for one must give the best or fail; and the fact that much must be sacrificed and foregone while striving for success. Failure must be faced and endured and excellence secured by slow degrees; confidence in one's ability established by many repetitions of great excellence; every resource of nature and art garnered with untiring industry and love and care. All are not willing to wait and serve. There

are minor prizes more easily won. In these days, too, an actor with this ambition must back himself financially. When Booth and the Shakespearians of his day went forth, an ambitious player could adventure without serious expense. He could easily engage a company of eager companions, knights errant, each one of whom would provide his own costumes to the last detail. All scenery and properties were supplied by the theatres of each city wherein he was to play; the expense of transportation was limited to railway fares. Bad business entailed small loss. Therefore, in those days, we had many actors and actresses exploiting the plays of Shakespeare. Now, when he who would impersonate the Shakespeare heroes must provide costumes for a company of principals and supernumeraries numbering a hundred or more, purchase an elaborate scenic equipment for each play, carry a staff of expert stage-hands, carpenters, lightmen, property and wardrobe people, and musicians, the venturing forth in Shakespeare is a serious investment. No manager will back an actor in such an enterprise, and how shall the actor try his wings and prove his worth in the great rôles? He must win the sinews of war elsewhere and then back himself. This was my plan. For years I worked at modern comedy and farce and melodrama and romantic drama to save the money wherewith to produce 'Hamlet.' When I announced this intention three or four witty things were said, and my well-wishers looked extremely miserable. The expense of running my company with a repertoire of nine Shakespeare plays was between four thousand and five thousand dollars a week before I myself could make a penny of profit. Each new production would cost between fifteen and twenty thousand dollars."

"Nobody is questioning you on this subject," sighed "Me" wearily.

"I am talking to myself," I replied. "A national theatre will continue to be a dream until it is realized on the sane and simple lines of supplying the standard classic drama, Shakespearian and others, to the poor and uneducated at a nominal price. Three million dollars would build a national theatre in Washington. Endow it with an income of an hundred thousand a year, and enable it to produce a classic repertoire for the benefit of the multitude at an admission fee of from ten cents to fifty cents, the object being to plant broadcast an understanding and love for the best in dramatic literature. Such a theatre would elevate public taste, educate actors in the noblest exercise of their art, and hold up to native dramatists a perpetual example of form and style and standard. This company, playing from thirty to forty standard plays, could perform in all the principal cities each year at ten to fifty cents. By raising public taste, attendance at other good plays would be increased, a school for fine acting and oratory would be provided in the national capital. The poor and the uninformed would be constantly provided with the best examples of drama at a nominal price, or, as Matthew Arnold expresses it: 'It will not try to teach down to the level of inferior classes. It seeks to do away with classes, to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere, to make all men live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light . . . to make sweetness and light prevail.'

"If some such plan is not adopted the standard drama must die. Actors cannot afford to practise it; managers will not risk their money. This drama depends for

success on fine acting. Fine acting is the result of practise and cultivation and ceaseless effort to train and perfect expression of voice, gesture, eye, and mind. All the scenery in the world will not set before you the heroes and heroines of Shakespeare. One great actor is worth all the paraphernalia on earth. Let us have a national theatre to satisfy the hunger of the poor, not to be a toy added to the superfluous playthings of the rich. All the precepts in the world cannot teach the art of acting. One must act to learn to act, as one must dance to learn to dance, or speak to learn to speak. Theory is useless without practise, and practise can only be secured on a stage before an audience. It has been said: 'In the theatre those who can act, act; those who can't act, teach acting.' This may not be entirely just. But it is certain that there is much leading of the blind by those who are in need of spectacles. The national theatre shall provide a school where every distinguished native and foreign star shall be asked to discourse on his theory and practise, as in the Royal Academy Schools of Design in London each month a royal academician superintends the instruction of the pupils, thus giving them the advantage of all styles, all experience, all methods from which to form their own conclusions, and adjust their own vision that they may perceive nature through the eyes of many masters.

"To learn how to think, to avoid tricks, to express from within out, to steadily and patiently labor toward light and understanding and accomplishment—these can be acquired, given opportunity and instruction.

"The education of an actor in his craft is now entirely a matter of accident. Years are wasted in extraneous endeavor, in waiting about for an opportunity to prac-

tise, in doing work that is almost worthless to the particular individual. Personally I wasted five years looking for a chance to grow; five golden years, from nineteen to twenty-four, when I was eager to work each moment of the twenty-four hours and could only find employment which was but slightly helpful to the purpose I had in view. When at last I *made* the opportunity I craved, after waiting twenty years, I had to begin to learn all over again—new methods, new expression, new carriage—to fit me for the work I had now to do. I had acquired so many wrong ways of doing the thing that it was time to cease work before I had fairly begun.

"It is most interesting and romantic to read of the difficulties encountered and overcome by Kean, Irving, and other great actors, also the comment is picturesque that obstacles beget solutions and prove the mettle of a man, but hearts are broken at this game as often as strengthened; great artists are slain as well as evolved by such a struggle. Who would not have had Chatterton and Francis Thompson dealt with more gently by fate? Might not Edmund Kean have been even a greater artist than he was had evil fate not wrung from him the tragic cry: 'If I succeed I shall go mad'? Is it not sad that genius cannot be planted at once in the soil where it may gather to itself all the glory of the earth?

"I read some time since that a French painter, having arranged an exhibition of his works, which represented a lifetime of endeavor and, contemplating his paintings on the night before the exhibition, was suddenly overwhelmed with such dissatisfaction that, seizing a knife, he destroyed every canvas, and cried out that he must begin to learn again. 'Ah!' said I to myself, 'if I could

begin again now!' How is he fortified who perceives his own errors?

"Said the physician to the philosopher: 'You have only a week to live.'

"'Ah!' replied the sage, 'then it is time I began to study Sanscrit.'

"The divine fire of genius cannot be ignited at will, but the weapons to be wielded by talent, and which even genius must keep keen and bright, may be sharpened and polished, and handled with skill even by those who are not inspired. Harsh, throaty, or nasal voices can be made musical; vile enunciation can be made perfect; awkward bodies and limbs can be made graceful; restlessness can be trained to repose; even taste and tact and observation of color, form, and sound can be quickened and cultivated. These transformations industry and opportunity may accomplish. These the national theatre can supply.

"Surely Betterton had genius, yet Colley Cibber says of him, describing his exhaustive care: 'The least syllable too long or too slightly dwelt upon in a period depreciates it to nothing, which very syllable, if rightly touched, shall, like the heightening stroke of light from a master's pencil, give life and spirit to the whole.'

"Says Shakespeare of the dramatic poet, 'Set down with as much modesty as cunning'; of the actor: 'Acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness.'

"'He must, therefore, select from out the variety of passionate expression,' says Lewes, 'only those that can be harmoniously subordinated to a general whole. He must be at once passionate and temperate; trembling with emotion, yet with a mind in vigilant supremacy

controlling expression, directing every intonation, look, and gesture. The rarity of fine acting depends on the difficulty there is in being at one and the same moment so deeply moved that the emotion shall spontaneously express itself in symbols universally intelligible and yet so calm as to be perfect master of effects, capable of modulating voice or moderating gesture when they tend to excess or ugliness.'

"All this the actor must 'acquire and beget' 'with as much modesty as cunning.' We may not be born to genius, but we may acquire supreme skill. 'The second stroke upon the anvil' is demanded by every muse. The flashes of lightning which Hazlitt said Kean shed on the meanings of Shakespeare are as much the product of painstaking labor as was Keats's blaze of inspiration which suddenly evolved the words, 'A thing of beauty is a joy forever,' from his first draft: 'A thing of beauty is a constant joy.' The cultivated ear, the laboring mind, the restless hand—these from imperfection find perfection out."

"More matter with less art," said "Me" exhibiting an aptness of memory appropriate and irritating.

"Hear me!" I cried. "Again I will quote, for I am aware that I am no prophet in my own family. Hear Robert Ingersoll, the lovable, the wise, the liberator of mankind, the advocate of happiness, the champion of the stage——"

"Who was he?" muttered "Me."

"The great agnostic," I replied.

"What is an agnostic?" said "Me."

"In this case, one who believes in the Divinity of Man," said I. "Hear him and be still:

"'Most people love the theatre. Everything about it

from stage to gallery attracts and fascinates. The mysterious realm behind the scenes from which emerge kings and clowns, villains and fools, heroes and lovers, and in which they disappear, is still a fairy-land. As long as man is man he will enjoy the love and laughter, the tears and rapture of the mimic world.

"'Nearly all the arts unite in the theatre, and it is the result of the best, the highest, the most artistic that man can do.

"'In the first place, there must be the dramatic poet. Dramatic poetry is the subtlest, profoundest, the most intellectual, the most passionate and artistic of all. Then the stage must be prepared, and there is work for the architect, the painter, the sculptor. Then the actors appear, and they must be gifted with imagination, with a high order of intelligence——'"

"Ha, ha!" said "Me," "that makes me laugh."

"Silence, image!" I cried. "'They must have sympathies quick and deep, nature capable of the greatest emotion dominated by passion. They must have impressive presence, and all that is manly should meet and unite in the actor; all that is womanly, tender, intense, and admirable should be lavishly bestowed upon the actress. The great actor must be acquainted with the heart, must know the motives, ends, objects, and desires that control the thoughts and acts of men. He must be familiar with many people, including the lowest and the highest, so that he may give to others clothed with flesh and blood the characters born of the poet's brain. The great actor must know the relations that exist between passion and voice, gesture and emphasis, expression and pose. The great actor must be a master of many arts——

"'To produce a great play and put it worthily upon the stage involves most arts, many sciences, and nearly all that is artistic, poetic, and dramatic in the mind of man——

"'In the dramatic world Shakespeare stands alone. Compared with him, even the classic is childish——

"'The great dramatist is of necessity a believer in virtue, in honesty, in courage, in the nobility of human nature——

"'No one has ever yet seen any play in which in his heart he did not applaud honesty, heroism, sincerity, fidelity, courage, and self-denial; never. No man ever heard a great play who did not get up a better, wiser, and more humane man——

"'Only a few years ago our dear ancestors looked upon the theatre as the vestibule of hell, and every actor was going "the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire." I have lived long enough to hear the world—that is, the civilized world—say that Shakespeare wrote the greatest book that man has ever read; I have lived long enough to see actors placed with the grandest and noblest, side by side with the greatest benefactors of the human race——

"'The greatest man of whom we know anything devoted his life to the production of plays.

"'The basis of society has been the dollar. The literary man was a servant, a hack; why was this? He had no money.

"'Mozart was forced to eat at the table with coachmen, with footmen, and scullions. He was simply a servant who was commanded to make music for a pudding-headed bishop. The same was true of the great painters, and of almost all other men who rendered the

world beautiful by art and who enriched the languages of mankind. Now the literary man makes money. The man who can now paint a picture for which he receives from fifty to fifty thousand dollars is necessarily respectable. The actor who may realize from one to two thousand dollars a night or even more is welcomed in the stupidest and richest society. Many people imagine that he who amuses them must be lower than they; this, however, is hardly possible.'"

Here "Me" opened his goggle eyes—really his likeness to Poe's Raven was revolting. "The stage is immoral," he mumbled, "and is going to the dogs."

"Prophet!" cried I. "Thing of evil! Prophet, photograph, or devil, listen!

"'I believe that everything in the world that tends to make a man happy is moral; anything that bursts into bud and blossom and leaves the fruit of joy is moral.

"'The stage has taught the noblest lesson, the highest truth, and that is, it is better to deserve without receiving than to receive without deserving, better to be the victim of villainy than to be a villain, better to be stolen from than to be a thief.'"

"I have just been thinking," said "Me," yawning, "an agnostic means a man who doesn't know."

"Well?" said I.

"Well," continued the blinking "Me," "from what you have just read I am convinced that that definition is correct."

"Miserable daguerreotype!" I cried—but the limp bundle in my grasp was fast asleep. I had wasted my wisdom.

I thrust "Me" back in his frame and went to bed.

"Lo! Virtue triumphs—Evil dies,
The curtain falls, the play is o'er.
Behold! the wisdom of the wise,
How weak true lovers love before—
See laughter loud, and tears galore,
Have swayed alike the fool and sage:
When lured by him to Fancy's shore
Who 'struts his hour upon the stage.'

"The lights are out—'mid smiles and sighs
The throngs into the darkness pour—
Into the land of memories
Fade tales of Fame and Fairy lore;
Of love and longing, peace and war.
Is this the end of all his rage?
Is he a shadow, nothing more,
Who 'struts his hour upon the stage'?

"The painter from his canvas cries
To this new day from days of yore.
Do all the minstrels' melodies
Die with the life from which they soar?
Parchment and stone the learning bore
Of other times from age to age—
Shall he pass, as the winds that roar,
Who 'struts his hour upon the stage'?

"To soothe the sorry and the sore;
To be the weary's hermitage;
Shall this not be some payment for
Who 'struts his hour upon the stage'?"

# XLI

# UP THE CHIMNEY

SAID my fairy godmother, who is responsible for these pages: "There is no talk here about your own acting."

Said I: "There shall not be, and for these weighty reasons: Acting, if it speaks at all, leaves nothing to be said. If it is still-born, the less said of it the better. Also I have observed of the greatest actors of my time—Jefferson, Irving, McCullough, my father, Barrett, Tree, even Edwin Booth—that, although they continued industriously to act, many persons, in the theatre and out of the theatre, who were not acting insisted that those who were acting could not act; so that the curious condition existed that, while the informed, but unemployed and inactive, proclaimed that the acting ones could not act, the uninformed but employed and active were constantly and successfully acting. That is to say, those who could act did *not*, and those who could not act *did*. I have ever been one of those who cannot act, and yet do act, which, being admitted, makes comment on my own acting needless."

"Still," persisted my fairy godmother, "you must have some estimate of your own work."

"I have," said I.

"As for instance?" queried my fairy godmother. "What were your best achievements?"

"King Lear, Coriolanus, Cardinal Wolsey, Richard the Third——"

"Stop!" said she. "You have never played these characters."

"Never!" said I.

"How, then, can they be your best work?"

"One's execution," I replied, "never comes up to one's conception. It is so with a sculptor, a painter, a poet, also an actor. The figure that imagination bodies forth so far exceeds in beauty, truth, and grandeur the actual achievement that the thing done is puny to the thing undone."

"But those parts you have played?"

"Hideous disappointments, all of them! Crippled at birth, bereft of half their promised perfections, never to be contemplated without regrets! But for the songs never sung, the pictures never painted! Yes, I must say I was the best King Lear I ever heard of; the best Wolsey, Coriolanus, and Richard, Othello, Iago, King John, Brutus, Cassius——"

But I was talking to the air, my fairy godmother had fled up the chimney.

"The swallows fly beyond the setting sun
Seeking the shelter of a kindlier shore—
To such fair haven, now my work is done,
I, too, would steer—nor venture evermore—
Arise, dear heart! and hasten—haste before
Our wings are broken and our weak eyes shun
The cloudless skies—away! away! where none
Shall vex the quiet that our souls adore—
Not all the gaudy trappings we have worn—
Nor all the glitter of the gallant throng
Whose shouting drove our argosy along,
Outshines the beauty of a summer morn—
Outsings the music of the throstle's song
To some sweet solitude at evening borne."

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Dr Pangloss.....Mr Douglas Stewart
(From the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, his first appearance in America.)
Dick Dowlas.....Mr Prior
Steadfast.....Mr J. Munroe
Zekiel Homespun.....Mr F. S. Buxton
Kenrick.....Mr S. D. Johnson

Henry Moreland.....Mr Aiken
John.....Mr G. Johnson
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